

## **Action Learning Project Report**

PREVENT Institute 05



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### **Prevent Institute Louisville, Ky Team**

#### **Report On Youth Dating Abuse Community Needs Assessment**

##### **Executive Summary**

The Executive Summary that follows provides a brief overview of the goals and activities launched by the Louisville PreVent Team during the past six months with an update on the status of those goals. Following the synopsis, the report begins with a more detailed description of the goals; the activities undertaken to achieve these goals; and the outcomes of each goal. Finally, this report concludes with recommendations for action based upon the findings described within this report.

Youth dating abuse and sexual assault are prominent but less understood problems in the field of violence prevention. Although these forms of violence and abuse are fairly readily recognized as a substantial problem within the field of

violence prevention, the dynamics, consequences, incidence and prevalence of dating abuse and sexual assault among teenagers and young adults is not well understood on the national level and even less so on the local level. In deciding to address youth dating abuse prevention as our project, we were confronted with the realization that we do not yet have enough information about the incidence, prevalence, forms and dynamics of dating abuse and sexual assault to recommend, much less implement, a specific preventive intervention. Instead, the team recognized that a foundational effort was necessary before development or implementation of interventions took place. As the team explored these issues in Louisville Metro (using the tools and perspectives presented at the Prevent Institute) we realized that the cleanest and most authentic approach to the issue would be to start from the beginning. That is to say, we should begin by finding out what the questions are before we try to answer them. A needs assessment approach (using a step-wise method) allows us to explore the issue and identify the what the issues really are on the local level, who the issues affect, how and to what extent, and what ways are most appropriate in answering the identified questions, while holding our preconceptions and agendas in check. According to Hooper (1999) a “needs assessment clarifies what the problem is and why it exists, before creating solutions.” We recognized that our team was at a very early stage of the project; that our community did not have sufficient information or understanding of youth dating abuse; and we could not choose an intervention based on preference or predilection and still abide by the guidelines that we felt are inherent in a public

health approach to violence prevention. A needs assessment will clarify what the problem is; increase our understanding of what is currently available to address youth dating abuse in terms of knowledge, resources, data, commitment, and best and promising prevention practices.

Our project consists primarily of a planning process structured by goals and objectives. Following is the current status of these goals and objectives.

**Goal 1: Prevent team will develop a consensus definition of dating violence and rape/sexual assault within the continuum of violence and abuse**

ACHIEVED. The Prevent Team came together with a wide variety of background understanding of the issues of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. The first several weeks were spent collecting research and reviewing the literature on the issues to bring us to the same page about these issues. It is from this effort – the review of the literature as well as the discussions between us – that we came together with a consensus definition for our efforts which is described below in the body of this Report.

**Goals 2 & 3: Prevent team will identify existing dating violence data collection sources at the local, state and national level; Prevent team will identify and collect existing dating violence data and information available at the local, state and national level.**

ACHIEVED. The Prevent Team examined data collection mechanisms and sources and quickly learned that there are very few currently in place in Louisville Metro or state-wide in Kentucky. Those that are in place offer minimal data. We then turned to explore other potential data sources from which we might have been able to glean some understanding about the issues of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. The end result was the same, very limited data collection sources on the local or state level.

**Goal 4: Prevent team will compile information on best practices for primary prevention of dating violence.**

ACHIEVED. The Prevent Team researched a variety of sources for best practices – primarily through the literature. In the process of identifying best practices, the Prevent Team identified a number of what we’ve described as “promising practices” (i.e. those practices that have not been as rigorously evaluated but which either demonstrate some anecdotal promise, or which are recognized by other practitioners and communities as being a model approach.) Because primary prevention is a relatively new growth area in the movement against dating abuse and rape/sexual assault, the development of best and promising practices is still in its infancy. As such, the need for the Prevent Team to continuously keep abreast with best practices is paramount. It is also important to note that the overwhelming majority of data on youth dating abuse prevention programs were school-based programs.

**Goal 5: Prevent team will identify and collect existing policies and legislation relevant to dating violence**

ACHIEVED. The team undertook a search for organizational and governmental policies. Both local and state (Kentucky and other states) legislation was collected and analyzed. This search brought us to the conclusion that most policies do not address youth and when they do, it is done in an inconsistent manner. There are some promising policies, but youth dating abuse policy development is certainly an area that requires further work. Although not strictly a form of primary prevention, the Prevent Team does see a need to develop model policies and protocols, and support the effort of local organizations, schools, businesses and governmental entities to implement these policies and protocols.

**Goal 6: Prevent team will identify and collect information on availability and status of services and programs in Louisville Metro addressing dating violence**

ACHIEVED. Much of this effort had been completed and compiled by the Louisville Teen Dating Abuse Coalition (a broad-based network of organizations that was launched in 2002) but the Prevent Team was able to collect some additional information and identify some new resources, services and programs.

**Goal 7: Prevent team will review, organize and analyze collected data and information on dating violence**

ACHIEVED. See the narrative of Goal 2 and 3 above.

**Goal 8: Prevent team members will identify and contact local service providers and interested community members to participate as partners and collaborators in the Prevent project.**

ACHIEVED BUT ONGOING. The Prevent Team has identified a number of additional partners in this project including: the Americana Community Center, Seven-County Services, University of Louisville PEACC Program, CWF Legal Services, Metro Louisville Health Department, and the Youth Helpline. This will be an ongoing effort as we continue to identify other partners and broaden the collaboration. In addition, we feel confident that with the release of the report and the implementation of the strategic plan, other partners will self-identify and involve themselves in the project.

**Goal 9: Prevent team will assess the current availability and the potential availability of human and financial resources at the local, state and national level**

UNDER WAY. The Prevent Team has only made some initial inquiries towards this goal. We feel confident that there are multiple resources available to access that will assist us in developing a strategic plan to implement the recommendations at the end of this report.

**Goal 10: Prevent team will draft a needs assessment report with a set of recommendations on how to best implement dating violence primary prevention efforts in Louisville, Kentucky.**

UNDER WAY. This current report represents the fulfillment of most of this goal. Our goal is to have the much shorter version of this report with recommendations and a strong partnership with key stakeholders in place for Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October) 2005 to launch a release of the needs assessment and spotlight youth dating abuse in our community and the need for a coordinated, preventive effort.

**Goal 11: Prevent team will assess cultural and political readiness and resolve to implement recommendations in the report coming out of Goal 10.**

UNDER WAY. The Prevent Team has begun assessing the cultural and political readiness and will. Some additional time will be spent between the completion of this draft report and recommendations to more thoroughly assess cultural and political readiness and will. Now that we have something concrete to work from and to assess readiness and will against, we can more easily move forward on this goal.

## **Prevent Institute Louisville, Ky Team**

### **Report On Youth Dating Abuse Community Needs Assessment**

#### **Preventing Violence Before It Starts**

The problem of youth dating abuse has been documented in various fields as a national and international problem. Historically, youth dating abuse has only recently entered the public eye. Dating abuse is considered a type of intimate partner violence (IPV), but unique because of developmental issues and the legal context of adolescence. For the purpose of this project, dating abuse is primarily considered a public health problem with implications at every level of the ecological framework. According to *Healthy People 2010's Injury and Violence Prevention Objective*, "Teen dating violence is a concern that may stem from childhood abuse or other experiences with violence. Battering in teen relationships is very different from IPV that occurs between adults. The issue of youth dating abuse requires national attention and prevention efforts that need to continue focusing on adolescent violence within the larger context of family violence."

The following statistics illustrate the extent of the problem at the national level:

- 94% of 16-19yr old female victims were victimized by current or former girl/boyfriend.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ABA National Teen Dating Violence Prevention Initiative, website



- 58% of rape victims were raped between ages 12-24; 90% of rapes in which offender was <18, so was the victim.<sup>2</sup>
- Between 1993-1999, 22% of all homicides of 16-19 year old females were by intimate partners.<sup>3</sup>
- A girl who is physically assaulted in high school, is statistically highly likely to be assaulted in first year of college.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 in 5 girls in high school reports abuse by boyfriend.<sup>5</sup>
- Physical aggression is reported in 1 of 3 teen relationships.<sup>6</sup>
- Date rape accounts for about 70% of sexual assault of teen and college women; 38% are between 14-17years.<sup>7</sup>
- In a study of teen mothers, 55% of teen moms had experienced dating violence from boyfriends in the last 12 months.<sup>8</sup>
  - 30% of teen moms reported severe forms of dating violence.<sup>9</sup>
  - Young teen moms with older boyfriends were more likely to experience dating violence.<sup>10</sup>
  - 51% of teen moms reported at least 1 instance of birth control sabotage from boyfriends.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> National Center for Victims of Crime, Teen Dating Fact Sheet

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> From Center for Impact Research, Domestic Violence and Birth Control Sabotage: A report from the teen parent project, website (Study participants: teen moms, 11-21 yrs of age, mostly AA, N=474)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

- 21% of teen moms had experience work or school related sabotage from boyfriend.<sup>12</sup>
- 8% of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders report being victim of sexual dating violence.<sup>13</sup>
- Acquaintance rape accounts for 93% of all teen rapes.<sup>14</sup>
- 1 in 5 high school girls has been physically an/or sexually abused by a dating partner.<sup>15</sup>
- Verbal and psychological aggression is reported by 2/3 to ¾ of high school dating relationships.<sup>16</sup>

Youth dating abuse and sexual assault occur in the broader context of interpersonal violence (elder abuse, child abuse, domestic violence, racist and homophobic violence, etc.) However, the extent of the problem of youth dating abuse and sexual assault as well as the availability and type of primary prevention efforts in Louisville is currently unknown. In order to assess the scope of the problem in Louisville and ascertain the best and most promising approaches to this issue, we are conducting a comprehensive needs assessment through a step-wise planning process to determine the most appropriate primary prevention approaches targeting youth dating abuse and will develop a set of recommendations for a primary prevention approach to youth dating abuse for the Louisville community.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> NCVC, Dating Violence, website

<sup>14</sup> NCVC, Sexual Assault, website

<sup>15</sup> Jay Silverman, et al

<sup>16</sup> Cascardi et al, in Paul Schewe et al

The audience for the efforts described in this report and in the recommendations is multi-layered. The primary target audience is youth between the ages of 12 and 21 years of age. But in order to reach people in this age range, and to work effectively to prevent violence, violence prevention efforts must also work with parents, youth-serving professionals, and others who are involved in the lives and activities of youth and young adults. The immediate work, the needs assessment, will primarily impact and involve professionals working with youth and in violence prevention. The focus of our efforts will be increased knowledge, awareness, understanding of, and commitment to the youth dating abuse problem in Louisville Metro. Finally, the Project will also identify strengths and gaps in the current resources available to youth in the youth dating abuse arena and explore and recommend best and promising practices in primary prevention of youth dating abuse.

To achieve our goal of engaging youth serving professionals, parents and other adults who work with youth, we have identified key community members and stakeholders who will be invited to take part in the development of this effort and the strategic planning of the recommendations that follow this report (the Americana Community Center, Seven-County Services, University of Louisville PEACC Program, CWF Legal Services, Metro Louisville Health Department, and the Youth Helpline). The timing and extent of the involvement will be determined by the natural overlap of the stakeholders' work with this project and their availability and interest.

## **INITIAL FINDINGS**

Through our efforts, we identified that those communities that have addressed youth dating abuse have done so primarily via school-based initiatives. Some communities have also undertaken community-level approaches and awareness-raising approaches. So far, we have only found evaluations for school-based programs.

The efforts developed to address dating abuse have derived from various theoretical approaches. These theoretical approaches fall along these general categories: feminist, sociological, cognitive, and behavioral theories. Feminist theory highlights patriarchal societal structures, consciousness-raising and changes in attitudes; cognitive theory focuses on how people understand material, by looking at the learner's maturational stage, their capacity to learn, and their learning style; sociological theory highlights the relationship between gender-based power inequities; behavioral theory emphasizes skill-building as essential element in prevention of dating abuse. Some feminist theorists argue that a focus on skill-building implies victims may be to blame for the abuse because of their poor skills.

The development of school-based dating abuse programs began appearing in the US and Canada in the mid-80s. Early adolescence was seen as a key opportunity to model healthy relationships and non-violent conflict resolution. Generally, these efforts focused on a mix of knowledge, attitude, and skill-based

objectives. Changing attitudes is generally seen as an important common aspect of all these approaches. So far, there is no consensus on content of dating abuse prevention programs. There is also a great degree of diversity in mode of presentation of the program content. A review of “A Resource Manual, Preventing Violence Against Girls and Young Women,” from the University of Calgary indicates the following findings. One key issue of mode of presentation is whether program is gender-specific. Research shows that females tend to start out at higher level of knowledge and increase more through program. Some research has shown a “backlash” effect on young men. Some of this research would indicate the possible gains in addressing at least some of the program content in gender specific groups for greater benefit to both groups. A number of other program factors vary from program to program, providing little uniformity in approaches.

The evaluations of the programs are as varied as the programs themselves in terms of types of evaluations conducted and results. Although most programs aim as one of their objectives to changes attitudes, this has not been as sustainable as other program. Some of the key factors that have been identified as playing a role in the relative effectiveness and impact of these programs include:

- Length of time of the program (some evaluations show that programs with success in changing attitudes required 2 years for females, and 3 years for

males. Length of program also varies greatly, from one session, to a few days, to a multiple session program over a school year.<sup>17</sup>

- Limitations of pre and post- test evaluations to show change in attitude or other key outcomes.
- Gender difference seems to be a significant factor in both dating abuse and in the prevention of dating abuse.
- Effects of peer pressure. Young women seem to resist peer pressure more successfully than males.
- Evaluations of many programs currently being implemented have failed to show changes in desired outcomes.

Because of this diversity in evaluation outcomes and lack of consistent data on any one program or curriculum, it was decided mid-way through the project that we would not recommend a specific program or model, but rather would base our recommendations on effective components that have either been evaluated or seem to be promising practices based on other standards of prevention. We would then develop a primary prevention plan based on the various elements that have been shown to have the most success (either as a “best” or a “promising” practice).

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<sup>17</sup> School Based Violence Prevention Programs: A Resource Manual, Preventing Violence Against Girls and Young Women, from University of Calgary, Canada, at [www.ucalgary.ca](http://www.ucalgary.ca)

## **USING DATA**

Our team found an alarming dearth of available data on youth dating abuse. This lack of data encompasses all aspects of youth dating abuse information from medical, to criminal and legal, to epidemiological and general research literature. We have not found sufficient incidence and prevalence data on dating abusive behavior, injuries or deaths. Further, any data from the legal or criminal system is also very limited. The primary problem seems to be the classification of behaviors that indicate youth dating abuse are very seldom referred to as such. Rather, they are referred to by specific action terms with no context or intentionality of the action. Although we were able to access medical records and segregate them by age and gender, the ICD 9 codes used were not aligned with youth dating abuse or even intimate partner violence. Existing collection mechanisms do not collect the most relevant, useable, or valid information on youth dating abuse.

Furthermore, those data collection systems that do exist only refer to physical and/or sexual violence. While these are the two most alarming indicators of dating abuse, there are numerous others that are currently not identified in any known data collection system. Thus the true incidence, prevalence, dynamics, or impact of youth dating abuse is not known.

In the process of attempting to identify and collect data, the team identified a number of existing data collection mechanisms that could be expanded to

provide a better picture of dating abuse in our community. In addition, the team met with key contact persons in charge of the data sources or data collection mechanisms. Further, we identified potential for new data collection mechanisms. Below are listed some of the data collection mechanisms and sources that we have identified through our research.

“The **BRFSS** is a telephone survey conducted by the health departments of all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam with assistance from CDC. States use BRFSS data to identify emerging health problems, to establish health objectives and track their progress toward meeting them, and to develop and evaluate public health policies and programs to address identified problems. The BRFSS is the primary source of information for states and the nation on the health-related behaviors of adults. The BRFSS questions consist of a CDC-developed standard core questionnaire and some additional, optional modules also developed by the CDC. Non-governmental organizations also use BRFSS data to create health promotion programs and to decrease unhealthy behaviors. BRFSS data is also used to evaluate effectiveness of programs by providing measurements of prevalence of health-related behaviors.

Locally, the BRFSS does not collect information on interpersonal violence. A new module for interpersonal violence and sexual assault has recently been introduced by the CDC for possible use for BRFSS (we have copies of these). However, these modules are optional. Currently, there are about 90 questions



and according to the local health department the length of this survey reduces participation. The local health department is not sure that they could add more modules at this time, but are interested in exploring this possibility. For now, BRFSS is not a source for youth<sup>18</sup> dating abuse data but it is a potential collection mechanism via use of the new optional modules.

The **Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System** (YRBSS) is an epidemiologic surveillance system that was established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor the prevalence of youth behaviors that most influence health. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is one component of the YRBSS. This survey provides a wide sampling of 9<sup>th</sup> – 12 grade students from across the country.

Youth dating abuse behavior is captured in the following YRBSS questions: “The last time you were in a physical fight, with whom did you fight?”, “During the past 12 months, how many times did your boyfriend or girlfriend ever hit, slap or physically hurt you on purpose”; and “have you ever been forced to have sexual intercourse when you didn’t want to”.

The Kentucky YRBS began collecting intimate partner data only recently so it does not provide us with information to determine trends. However, it does show that 11.7 % of students experienced being hit slapped or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend and 9.0% had been physical forced to have

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<sup>18</sup> Because our definition of youth is 12 to 21 years old, the BRFSS which collects information on persons older than 18 years would be applicable to youth dating abuse.

sex.

It is worth repeating that this data only reflects experiences of being physically hurt or sexually assaulted – which are only two (and arguably, the two least common) indicators of dating abuse in adolescents. As such, while significant, these findings are a dramatic under-reporting of the true incidence of dating abuse in Kentucky.

Despite the lack of long-term information in the Kentucky YRBS, it is safe to conclude that, based upon the national and state-level information available, youth dating abuse occurs regularly among the students surveyed.

Locally in Louisville Metro, YRBS is administered by the Health Promotion Schools of Excellence (HPSE) for Jefferson County Public Schools. Currently, only a couple of questions ask about youth dating abuse. A noted problem locally is that the YRBS is a voluntary survey and not many schools participate, possibly limiting its generalizeability due to the non-random nature of schools that participate and limited number of children surveyed.

### **Drug, Alcohol and Violent Crime Database Report**

This database report is prepared each year by the Louisville and Jefferson County Crime Commission to track incidents of drug, alcohol and violent crime; ensure that these issues remain on the forefront of the community agenda; and

that strategies are implemented to address these issues. The report provides a detailed account of these incidents and tracks the status of criminal offenses from arrest to final disposition on both youth and adults. This data and statistics on youth offenders is not available at Jefferson County Youth Detention Center (JCYC) but is vital and this report provides one of a very few avenues to access local youth criminal data. The categories of violent crime outlined in this report include: homicide, rape, robbery, felony assault, misdemeanor assault, felony burglary and misdemeanor burglary. For the purpose of this review only rape, felony assault, and misdemeanor assault data were reviewed.

The review of this data demonstrates that total violent crime among juveniles has dropped over the past few years, but the incidence of some violent crimes has risen. This report does not include a breakdown for juvenile intimate partner violence (youth dating abuse). Therefore, this data alone cannot provide a picture of youth dating abuse in Louisville Metro but can be one of the key elements in creating a more complete picture from several incomplete sources.

**Review of 2000 -2004 ICD9-CM Code Data from the Metro Louisville Hospitals and Metro Health Department** As part of the data collection process, the team met with local physicians at the children's hospital. One of the primary findings as a result of these discussions is that the codes used for medical records are primarily coded by the billing clerks rather than the treating physician. Therefore, they often fail to accurately portray the reason for the hospital visit or cause of injury. Medical coding from hospital visits therefore fail to meet the

standards for surveillance and epidemiological purposes. A better source of data *could* be the mandated Cabinet for Families and Children (CFC) and Crimes Against Children Unit (CACU) of the local police department, however the degree to which these data sources assess for abuse within dating relationships is currently unknown

The local health department collects discharge files from all local hospitals with ICD 9 codes for each. We were warned, however, that the data they receive is not as complete as they would ideally like it to be as hospitals are not mandated to submit this data. In an effort to fill in some gaps, the local health department offered to run a query of their database of discharge files from all local hospitals for relevant ICD 9 codes (provided by local children's hospital, Kosair Hospital) that would be used for dating abuse/interpersonal violence/sexual assault and run this information against the age and gender of the patient.

With assistance from the physicians, we were able to identify a number of codes (ICD 9 codes) that would likely be used in youth dating abuse or intimate partner violence. The following codes were identified and later used to review local hospital discharge data collected by the local health department:

<b>E960.0</b> Unarmed fight or brawl
E960.1 Rape
E967.1 Perpetrator of child and adult abuse - by other specified person
E967.3 Perpetrator of child and adult abuse - by spouse or partner
E967.9 Perpetrator of child and adult abuse - by unspecified person

E968.0 Assault by other and unspecified mean - Fire
E968.1 Assault by other and unspecified mean - Pushing from a high place
<b>E968.2</b> Assault by other and unspecified mean - Striking by blunt or thrown object
E968.3 Assault by other and unspecified mean - Hot liquid
E968.5 Assault by other and unspecified mean - Transport vehicle
E968.6 Assault by other and unspecified mean - Air gun
E968.7 Assault by other and unspecified mean - Human Bite
<b>E968.8</b> Assault by other and unspecified mean - Other specified means
<b>E968.9</b> Assault by other and unspecified mean - unspecified mean (including assassination (attempt) NOS, Homicidal (attempt): injury NOS, wound NOS, Manslaughter (non-accidental), Murder (attempt) NOS, Violence, non-accidental

The highlighted codes get the most use and are vague in nature, not specifying if the violence was male on male, male on female, and certainly not identifying involvement of dating partners.

There are some discrepancies between the hospital information and the health department numbers on hospital discharge data, but based on the hospital discharge information kept by the Louisville Metro Health Department the number of abuse and assault related E-codes for youth have increased 44% from 2000 to 2004. This would have to be compared to population and other trends, and on initial review seem to contradict some of the national trend data. The discharge data do indicate more youth being treated at our area hospitals for abuse and assault related injuries.

Lastly, the health department discharge codes were broken down by gender and zip codes. In persons under 20 years of age, the distribution of injuries is distributed almost equally among males and females. For persons older than 20 years of age, the distribution is heavily skewed towards males (i.e. more males than females are injured). This is most likely the result of male on male injuries, but the data does not reflect context in which the injuries were inflicted so this is difficult to ascertain. Furthermore, there is no information from these data sets as to the nature of the relationship between the parties.

**Jefferson County Public Schools surveys.** The local public school system administers a survey to every student in every school in Jefferson County elementary, middle and high schools (main county of Louisville Metro). The survey is also given to parents to fill out. Both surveys are completed in the fall of the school year.

There are several sections to the survey (which is duplicated below in total for review): School Climate and Atmosphere, Quality of Education, and Safety. The sections that most closely relate to youth dating abuse are School Climate/Atmosphere and Safety. There are no questions specifically on youth dating abuse, but some are clearly related:

#### School Climate and Atmosphere

- Students know rules and follow them
- Students are respectful to one another

- I have a friend my age to turn to when I need to talk
- Teachers expect students to follow rules.
- My teachers really care about me as a person
- My teachers listen to my cares and concerns
- Teachers do not have to spend a great deal of time dealing with disruptive students
- Adults in my school set a good example for students.

### Safety

Adults in My School:

- Take care of anything unsafe they know about
- Do a good job of being visible during class changes and times when groups of students are together
- Handle safety concerns quickly

I feel Safe:

- Riding a school bus
- At the bus stop
- Walking to and from school
- In the classrooms
- In the cafeteria
- In the hallways during class changes
- In the restrooms at school
- Outside the building before and after school

- When I participate in activities before or after school
- When I attend school events (Sports, concerts, etc.)

I rate the following as a School Problem:

- vandalized school property
- stolen or vandalized school property
- gang activities
- use of alcohol on school property
- use of drugs on school property
- sale of drugs on school property
- presence of weapons on school property
- arguments or fights between students of different races/cultures

Within the past six months:

- Have you been physically assaulted while on school property?
- Have you seen a students being physically assaulted at school?
- Have you seen a weapon carried or kept by anyone on school property?
- Have you seen drugs carried, sold, or used by anyone on school property?

According to the student responses, the large majority of elementary school students indicate feeling safe and having confidence in teachers, administrators and other adults to take care of any issue that could lead to unsafe conditions.



Middle school students, however, indicate a significant move away from this sense of safety and trust. This trend away from feeling safe and confident in adults handling unsafe conditions continues to increase even more in high school, although middle and high school students responded in a very similar manner to this survey. Overall, Elementary School students gave school safety issues an overall GPA of 3.3; Middle School students gave an overall GPA of 2.6; and High School students gave an overall GPA of 2.7.

Like many of the tools discussed, this survey could also be very useful as a data collection mechanism on youth dating abuse if relevant questions were added. We also question the timing of the survey. Distributing the survey in the fall before students have a chance to experience the school environment probably does not accurately reflect students' true experiences. Distributing the survey later in the year would likely change the findings.

## **LITERATURE SEARCH**

As part of the data collection goals and objectives of this project, we performed a thorough literature search on youth dating abuse. We classified the type of information we researched according to the categories outlined in the goals and objectives. This search yielded limited data. It is apparent that youth dating abuse is a somewhat young field of research and that the various nuances of this phenomenon have only recently begun to be explored. We found consistent information on the general incidence and prevalence of youth dating abuse, but

this data relied heavily on data collection mechanisms that we know to be limited or flawed in the ability to reflect fully the reality of youth dating abuse. As described above, these data collection processes only assess for physical or sexual violence, which does not reflect the true nature and forms of dating abuse. Secondly, the data collections systems largely rely on incidence data. The definition we use (based on the literature review) defines dating abuse (like domestic violence) as a pattern of behavior. Focusing on incidence of actions rather than patterns risks overstating some manifestations of abuse while understating others. For example, if only measuring incidence, there is no way to distinguish aggressive from defensive violence. While hitting within a relationship can be generally understood as problematic, there is clearly a difference between using defensive violence and perpetrating dating abuse. The vast majority of the research we examined did not examine these crucial differences. Smaller studies of youth yielded more interesting information about youth dating abuse with results that hint at higher rates of youth dating abuse.

In researching various aspects of youth dating abuse, such as health impact; cultural and ethnic variations; subgroups of youth such as GLBT and teen mothers; socioeconomic level data; and other factors we found even more limited research. For some areas, we found very little or no research in youth and had to use research literature on adult interpersonal violence and extrapolate based on some of the unique dynamics of youth dating abuse that have been uncovered.

In addition to a literature search, we also collected information on policies and legislation pertaining to youth dating abuse. This information is summarized under the respective goal in the **Program Planning and Evaluation** section. Information on policies and legislation was also limited. We found that most policies and legislation addressing intimate partner violence do not address youth. When they do, they do so in an inconsistent manner (at times, even within the same jurisdiction). It is imperative that a more thorough policy and legislative analysis be conducted to assess the need for policy and legislative changes and standardization across the states in order to better protect and hold accountable persons involved in youth dating abuse.

Another category of data collected was information on models and types of prevention interventions and evaluation data on these programs. This data is also limited. We did locate some valuable descriptive data on programs, mostly school-based. The evaluation data was available but it is apparent from review of this data that more rigorous and better-planned evaluations are needed. The existing data makes identifying effectiveness difficult because many of the evaluations only conduct pre and post test evaluations. Some studies have shown that the effect of some youth dating abuse prevention interventions are only effective for a short amount of time, while others have shown that it takes a long exposure to the intervention before measurable or lasting change occurs and that this happens at a different point for females and males. Despite this, most existing interventions do not last as long as studies have indicated would be

necessary and do not evaluate past the initial period after the intervention. This information is also summarized in detail under the according goal in **Program Planning and Evaluation** section.

**Conclusion on Data Collection.** It is apparent from the extensive search we conducted on youth dating abuse that there is further need for research and data collection in this field. Some of the absence of data can be explained by the fact that it is a young field, only having recognized youth dating abuse as a separate phenomenon in the last couple of decades. There is certainly room for existing data collection mechanisms to expand or be refined to collect data on youth. Further, the existing data and research should better inform the types of information that needs to be collected and how it should be collected.

## **CREATING A VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

The Louisville Prevent Team shares a vision of creating a community (Louisville Metro, Kentucky) that does not tolerate dating abuse and rape/sexual assault among youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 21; one in which all sectors and members of the community feel empowered to challenge the attitudes and beliefs that condone or tolerate dating abuse and rape/sexual assault; and one in which all sectors and members of the community are offered an opportunity to engage with youth in developing models of healthy and respectful relationships. Having five individuals representing five different organizations come together to create and agree on such a vision is a first step in

creating sustainability. We believe that sustainable change must happen at various levels. Certainly, we believe that this project is creating change at the individual and relational level. We hope that the outcome of our needs assessment will contribute to and serve as a catalyst for sustainable change at the organizational and societal levels.

This project has amplified and built upon other projects in the community addressing a community response to violence. One of the efforts this project has built upon is what the Center for Women and Families initiated 3 years ago to create a coordinated community-wide response to address teen dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. This effort included education and prevention as one of its activities (education, services for victims, programming for youthful offenders and policies/laws advocacy) and includes over 20 local organizations. The Prevent Project can be understood as being a focused development of this broader coalition. As such, the Prevent Project has access to these organizations, as well as several additional partners that we have identified as a result of our efforts for this project. Because this part of the project focused on doing a step-wise assessment and developing this report with recommendations, the opportunity for partner involvement beyond the immediate Prevent Team was somewhat limited for the product development. However, the Prevent Team has already secured commitments from several additional partners (listed below in goal 8), and there is a strong commitment and excitement about engaging in a primary prevention effort in our community with broad ranging buy-in.

It is also important to note that this effort has stretched already limited resources to an extreme degree. The current Prevent Team was able to complete the activities to see this project to this point, but in order to continue, expand, and fulfill the recommendations highlighted herein, the project will need greater buy-in from more partners and some additional resources, including funding and dedicated staff. The experience and skills that the Prevent Team currently has include:

- Curricula development;
- Program evaluation;
- Partnerships with local colleges and universities to assist with the development of evaluation tools and processes of local efforts;
- Training skills (of youth and adults);
- Policy analysis and development;
- Community organizing;
- Strategic planning
- Grant writing

Ideally, this project will be able to access funding to hire a full-time coordinator who will focus exclusively on coordinating the follow-through of the recommendations that appear at the end of this report, ensure that partners are supported in their involvement, and additional partners are identified and

encouraged to participate. In order to truly implement a primary prevention effort based on the ecological framework, additional resources will also be necessary:

- Funding and expertise on developing a media campaign,
- True buy-in from the public school system, as well as the private schools (mostly Catholic) in the area to allow the recommendations developed by the Prevent Team to be implemented in those schools,
- Buy-in from other sectors and associations that work with youth (i.e. boys and girls clubs, youth ministries, etc.)
- Additional training for members of the extended Prevent Team on the different theoretical and practical foundations highlighted in this report (e.g., social capital, media campaigns, social marketing, etc.);
- Solid buy-in from the Metro Government, particularly those departments that most relevant to this project (e.g. Health Department, Police Department, etc.)

Again, with our focus on addressing change at every level of the ecological framework, we believe that by approaching this issue one step at a time, we will nourish forward-moving efforts and attitudes that will lead to sustainable change at the individual, relational, organizational, community and societal levels.

## Program Planning and Evaluation

*“The aim of a needs assessment is to better meet the needs of your target population.*

*The process of needs assessment is about gathering information to find out what those needs are, and what are the best ways of meeting them.”<sup>19</sup>*

Due to the nature of our project (needs assessment), this section follows a STEPWISE planning process and is to a great extent represented by our project goals and objectives. Our planning process began at the Prevent Institute in January 2005. Despite having come to the Institute with a plan for our project, we decided to take a few steps back and rethink what the ultimate goal of our efforts should be. A needs assessment was selected as the tool that would get us closest to our purpose of contributing to the development and implementation of a best practices, evidence-based approach to preventing youth dating abuse. This needs assessment is our planning process and it will be used strategically to achieve our stated purpose of developing and implementing a best practices, evidence-based primary prevention approach to youth dating abuse. Accordingly, the needs assessment will:

- ❑ identify the needs of a target population in a particular area;
- ❑ help to prioritize those needs to ensure better planning of local services and more effective allocation of resources;
- ❑ develop an implementation plan that outlines how identified needs will be addressed.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “Needs Assessment,” Effective Interventions Unit, Substance Misuse Division, Scottish Executive, <http://www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/eiu/eiu.htm>



### ***Clarifying the Problem***

For our project, the entire process of a needs assessment serves to “clarify the problem.” In fact, the purpose of a needs assessment is to clarify the problem, who the problem affects and how, what we know and what resources are available to deal with the problem, and what the best ways to address the newly defined problem are. For us this process began by revealing our assumptions about youth dating abuse, prevention, and needs assessments. It also ended up including revealing our assumptions about teamwork and collaboration and teaching us a great deal about the influence of the unspoken and the importance of creating a transparent process when working in a team.

The first element of our needs assessment was to clarify what it was that we were going to explore. To do this we had to define a number of things. Having a common, consensus definition allowed us to speak in the same language and know what we meant when using a certain word. To do this, we needed to define the area we were going to explore geographically, philosophically, and otherwise. We also needed to decide what the issue was not and how it distinguished itself from similar issues (intimate partner and domestic violence). The process of developing the goals and objectives also informed how we were going to create a picture of the questions to be asked to better understand youth dating abuse in Louisville Metro. What we came up with in the process of clarification is as follows:

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

The geographic confines of our inquiries are Louisville Metro; the new city created by the merging of Jefferson county and the old city of Louisville. Louisville is the largest city in Kentucky and the 16<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation since merger. The city sits on 385 square miles with a population of nearly 700,000 residents. Kentucky is a rural state, so Louisville is quite different from the rest of the state. Louisville has the largest public school system in the state (96,000 students).

The issue we are exploring is youth dating abuse and in order to further clarify what this means, we have developed a consensus operational definition (see below). This definition incorporates rape and sexual assault within the confines of a dating relationship. We did not explore rape and sexual assault outside of the dating relationship. This definition is distinct from adult intimate partner violence (IPV) because of the developmental status of youth, the legal standing of youth in our society, and because of certain differences in the dynamics and patterns of abuse between youth and adults found in the research literature. Other elements that make youth dating abuse unique is the apparent lack of resources, data, and full and accurate awareness on this issue. As mentioned before, youth dating abuse is different from IPV also in terms of policy and legislation. Youth are often not covered in policies and legislation addressing intimate partner violence and are given limited, if any, legal recourse in protecting themselves from abuse. The issue is further complicated when the abuser is also a minor.

As we delved into researching youth dating abuse, we found that most information on interventions and evaluative data come from school-based programs. For this reason, our work has been somewhat limited and addresses primarily school based approaches to preventive interventions when it comes to reviewing the existing evaluative data.

***CURRENT ACTIVITIES, RESOURCES, ASSETS AND CAPACITY IN PLACE  
TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM***

**Goal 1: Prevent team will develop a consensus definition of dating violence within the continuum of violence and abuse**

The Louisville Prevent Team researched the data on youth dating abuse and rape/sexual assault to develop a consensus definition. Based on the evidence we examined, the Louisville Prevent Team developed the following definitions of teen dating abuse and rape/sexual assault:

Dating Abuse has been defined as a *pattern* of behavior used by a dating partner to maintain power and control within the relationship (emphasis added). These various tactics include physical violence, verbal abuse and name-calling, threats and intimidation (both physical and emotional), using male privilege, psychological coercion, harassment, stalking and use of younger children or pets. This definition is an extension of that offered by Hickman et al (04) that describes partner violence as “a continuum of abuse” (Page 123).

Most definitions of dating abuse/violence focus on specific acts of violence. For example, Wolfe, Wekerle et al (03) define abuse or violence interchangeably as “acts of physical aggression, intimidation or coercion which range from *threats, pushes to slaps and beatings and forced sex*” (page 279, emphasis added). The limitation of this form of definition is that it focuses only on specific acts rather than a compendium of acts used conjointly to maintain power and control.

This broader definition provides a better basis for understanding the full range of behaviors that fall within this definition.

The current project defines dating *abuse* as opposed to *violence*, because, as Funk (2001) found, teenagers tend to be reticent of defining some of these behaviors as “violent.” More often than not, teenagers are apt to see the term of dating violence as limited only to acts of physical aggression, and not incorporating the full range of behaviors and experiences that make up dating abuse.

Sexual Assault can be understood as any forced or coerced sexual contact. Rape is one form of sexual assault and is understood as involving penetration. But other forms of sexual assault are also common amongst adolescents. Sexual assault is understood as being one part of dating abuse dynamics, however teens are also sexually victimized outside of dating relationships. As such, prevention efforts need to focus on both.

Team's final consensus definition: Youth Dating Abuse is a pattern of behavior, attitudes, and beliefs that seek to exert control and power over another person. The relationship is characterized by unequal status of the parties involved. Dating abuse often involves reciprocal abusive behavior, but it is the unequal status and exertion of control and power that differentiates the victim from the perpetrator. A dating relationship is defined as a person involved in an intimate or romantic association with another person, regardless of length or exclusivity of relationship. For the purpose of this definition, youth is defined as persons age 12 to 21. Tactics used in youth dating abuse include one or more of the following:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Threat and intimidation
- Use of male privilege
- Psychological abuse
- Harassment
- Sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape
- Isolation
- Excessive jealousy
- Indifference
- Threats of separation and reprisals
- Damaging reputations

- Harassment after separation
- Abuse of pets
- Destruction / control of property
- Abuse of or threatening of children
- Economic abuse or isolation
- Medical/health isolation and control
- Being forced into unhealthy behaviors (substance use, other risky behavior)
- Birth control sabotage
- Work/school sabotage

For the purpose of our definition, rape and sexual assault are a component of youth dating abuse. This includes rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse within dating relationships but excludes rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse outside of dating relationships. Although we recognize that rape, sexual assault and sexual abuse occur outside of dating relationships, among acquaintances and peers at social events, and have a negative impact on youth, we chose not to include this component in order to really focus on a well-defined and delineated issue. We also believe that although acquaintance and peer rape, sexual assault and abuse are different from attacks by a stranger, it is also distinct from such abuse within a dating relationship.

**Goals 2 & 3: Prevent team will identify existing dating violence data collection sources at the local, state and national level; Prevent team will identify and collect existing dating violence data and information available at the local, state and national level**

The Louisville Prevent Team examined a plethora of data collection sources on the local, state and national level to determine the incidence and prevalence of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault amongst our target population in Metro Louisville. We examined police reports, calls to local hotlines (with particular focus on the local domestic violence and rape/sexual assault hotlines, hospital ICD 9 codes, health department data collections sources (such as the YRBS), local school system, and others. What we found, by and large, was that there are few data collection sources set up in Metro Louisville or in Kentucky that assess for teen dating abuse or rape/sexual assault. For example, although the hospitals do apply ICD 9 codes for assault, there is no current way to easily identify which are perpetrated by an intimate or dating partner as it is not the treating physician or healthcare provider who assigns a code, but rather a billing clerk who most often does not account for the context of the injury. Similarly, although the police take lots of reports on adolescents who perpetrate violence, they do not determine the relationship between the people.

This lack of data collections processes makes it extremely difficult to identify the true incidence and prevalence of youth dating abuse and rape/sexual assault in Metro Louisville. Without accurate measures to determine incidence and

prevalence, there is limited ability to assess the particulars of the dynamics of teen dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. Kentucky has recently added a question about intimate partner violence to their YRBSS survey (defined as “being hit or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend”) and found that 11.7% of students experience violence and an additional 9% have been forced to have sex. These are likely substantial under-reports of the true nature of the problem due to adolescents’ tendency to not define their experiences as abusive, in addition to the discrepancy between the definition offered for in the survey and the broad definition we have developed.

The local Youth Help-line provided another source of data on the incidence of youth dating abuse in Metro Louisville. Based on a review of their data, just under 21% of their calls are related to rape, sexual assault, domestic abuse or intimate partner violence, indicating that for the youth calling the hotline, this is a significant issue.

The Louisville Prevent Team then reviewed national data in an attempt to extrapolate from this information to our community to determine a rough guess as to the incidence, prevalence and particular dynamics of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. Using the work in Jay Silverman and the state of Massachusetts (the first and still only state that specifically asks about incidence of youth dating abuse in their YRBSS state-wide surveys), we estimate that of the 49,018 young women (between the ages of 14 and 24) currently in Metro



Louisville (based on 2000 data), 9804 are hit or sexually assaulted by a dating partner during their teen years. The limits of this data is that it only focuses on hitting and sexual assault thereby excluding the other forms of abuse that fit within the definition offered above. Thus, as large as this number is, it is likely a significant under-estimate as the true incidence of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault in Metro Louisville.

Within this goal, the Louisville Prevent Team had an additional objective of examining the incidence of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault in various youth sub-groups, such as Gay male, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning (GLBTQ), teen mothers, cultural and ethnic groups, immigrants, and socio-economic status. Given the dearth of available data sources about these issues generally in Metro Louisville, finding specific information within specific subgroups was particularly difficult and problematic. Again, the Louisville Prevent Team reviewed available data from other sources (national and articles written elsewhere). For example, we found no existing data on the incidence, prevalence or dynamics of dating abuse or rape/sexual assault amongst teenage GLBTQ populations. We did, however, learn anecdotally through the Louisville Youth Group (Louisville's local resource and support service for GLBTQ youth) that abuse within dating relationships of these youth is "not uncommon."

We then looked to existing data of adult GLBTQ populations with regard to dating abuse and rape/sexual assault and found same sex relationships are still largely

hidden and the incidence and prevalence of abuse within relationships is largely not understood, under-estimated and under-examined (West, 2002, Cruz, 2003). We also found that there are some limits to the data that is available. Most of the research on same-sex domestic violence is based on the work of GLBT people who are “out” about their sexuality and their same sex relationships. As such, it disproportionately represents White, middle class, and educated GLBT people – the same population of GLBT people who are more likely to be “out” in general. As such, some of the dynamics, special issues, and particular concerns for GLBT people who experience DV are not adequately addressed or understood. In addition, as West (2002) reports, there are severe methodological limitations to the limited information that is available. These limitations include: using different time frames to examine the incidence or prevalence, using different instruments which measure different behaviors, and differing definitions. Cruz (2003) also found that battered gay men rarely define their experiences as being “abuse” or “violent.” Most studies find that between 30 and 40% of survey participants reporting at least one incident of being physically hit by a dating partner. This is similar to the rate in heterosexual relationships (West, 2002). Given the problematic nature of using an incident of physical violence to determine the presence of dating or domestic violence, this rate of 30 – 40% gives us a very general guideline that is only slightly better than meaningless.

Teen moms appear to be at somewhat increased risk for dating abuse (including birth control sabotage as a form of abuse) and rape/sexual assault. According to the Center for Impact Research:

- 55% of teen moms had experienced DV from boyfriends in last 12 months
- 30% of teen moms reported severe forms of DV
- young teen moms with older boyfriends more likely to experience DV
- 51% teen moms reported at least 1 birth control sabotage from boyfriends
- 21% teen moms had experience work or school related sabotage from boyfriend.

Few studies have looked at specific dynamics of dating abuse among immigrant or minority youth. Those that have, indicate the importance of understanding the culture in which one is working and incorporating some of those cultural attributes and strengths into any prevention efforts (Black & Weisz, 2004). Some research has indicated that minority and immigrant populations in general (and youth in particular) are less likely to utilize resources that are perceived as “mainstream” and may similarly dismiss awareness or educational efforts that appear to be coming from mainstream sources. Thus, it seems safe to assume that prevention efforts that target minority and immigrant youth populations need to be developed from within, encouraging the involvement of leaders within those communities to assist in the development of prevention messages and activities. Those efforts that focus on immigrant populations in particular need to pay

attention to the difficulties faced of straddling two cultures, and the specific pressures, this places on adolescent and young adult immigrants (Black and Weisz, 2004). Finally, efforts that focus on immigrant and minority youth need to recognize the heterogeneity of any population that is being targeted.

Some specific findings from our literature search emphasize the importance of recognizing both protective and risk factors of various cultures and of immigrant status itself. For example, recent studies have found that Spanish speaking Latino youth are least likely to engage in sexual intercourse, while English-speaking Latinos were most likely to engage in sexual intercourse.<sup>21</sup> Our search (which was admittedly not exhaustive in this area) found that much of the literature on youth and intimate partner violence in Latino culture focuses on rape and sexual assault and we located one article specific to youth of immigrant background<sup>22</sup> "Dating Violence: A Qualitative Analysis of Mexican American Youths' Views," which reported on the results of focus groups with Mexican American youth. This focus group study supports the need to understand and include culture into planning prevention programs. Some interesting findings include that although focus group participants stated that violence is "wrong," they also identified specific contexts within which it is excusable; particularly cheating, flirting with someone else, or disrespect. The study also found that males had a harder time seeking help, even from friends. Further, when females disclose dating abuse to a male friend, they often recommend seeking help from

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<sup>21</sup> Reuters article, "Culture Keeps Hispanic Youth From Sex—Study, March 7, 2005

<sup>22</sup> Beverly M. Black and Arlene N. Weisz, "Dating Violence: A Qualitative Analysis of Mexican American Youths' Views, *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, Vol 13 (3) 2004

another friend, but not to parents or adults who could involve parents and Latina females are very likely to seek help from older brothers. As the largest and fastest growing immigrant group in the United States, Latinos are of particular importance to our preventive efforts. Some general findings in regards to Latinas and intimate partner violence include<sup>23</sup>:

- Latinas are more likely to accept rape myths than Euro American and African American young women
- Latinas also had the most punitive approaches towards rape survivors
- Latinos tend to hold stricter gender roles than non-Latinos (machismo, marianismo) albeit with wide variation given the heterogeneity of Latinos in the U.S.
- It is common for Latino boys to feel that showing jealousy and possessiveness for a girl is a show of love and respect
- The concepts of respect, honor, family and fidelity are tightly woven into Latino culture and manifest themselves in negative ways in terms of interpersonal violence
  - Violence is sometimes considered acceptable if it is a response to a violation of respect, honor, fidelity or the family
- Male violence is sometimes explained as “passion” or just part of being a man

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<sup>23</sup> Beverly M. Black and Arlene N. Weisz, “Dating Violence: A Qualitative Analysis of Mexican American Youths’ Views, *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, Vol 13 (3) 2004

- Studies have found Latinas, particularly those of Mexican ancestry, to be less likely to report sexual assaults to law enforcement than non-Hispanic white females
- Some studies find that “fear, shame and self blame” are primary motives for not reporting sexual assault
- Some studies support the idea that Latinos, and other immigrants, are less likely to use a resource or service if someone of their ethnicity/culture is not available to them
- Prevention efforts with Latinos need to take into account strong gender roles/stereotypes and work within these to emphasize positive aspects of roles and alternative ways to protect the sense of respect, honor, fidelity

Because of Louisville’s rapidly growing and diverse immigrant population, the Prevent Team recognizes the need to develop specifically targeted primary prevention efforts as part of a broader community effort. Further research will need to be conducted addressing other immigrant groups in Louisville. Additionally, the needs and issues of refugees, who generally have experienced a degree of trauma in their country of origin, needs to be explored more deeply in terms of the relationship and associations between this trauma and youth dating abuse.

The data on the dating abuse and rape/sexual assault of teens and young adults with regard to socio-economic status indicators is somewhat mixed. We did not

identify any data specific to youth. The data suggests a weak but possible correlation between socio-economic status and physical violence among married couples. This data tentatively suggests that people with lower incomes and lower levels of education are at higher risk of physical violence within relationships. Other data supports the notion that higher socioeconomic status offers some protection from intimate partner physical abuse.<sup>24</sup> This may be explained by having greater access to resources and mechanisms for protection as well as possible under reporting by persons of higher socioeconomic status. It is unclear, based on the data reported, if this is a higher risk for violence, or a higher rate of reporting. In addition, the types of incidents of abuse that are reported may skew the data as other types of abuse may not be reported but be just as prevalent in other income brackets. More interestingly, international research suggests that violence against women occurs more frequently in societies where men have greater “economic and decision-making power in the household, where women do not have easy access to divorce, and where adults routinely resort to violence to resolve their conflicts.”<sup>25</sup> Further, the WHO “World Report on Violence and Health” asserts “it is probable that poverty acts as a ‘marker’ for a variety of social conditions that combine to increase the risk faced by women.”<sup>26</sup> This data supports approaches that aim to improve the overall status of women and girls as a violence-prevention effort.

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<sup>24</sup> World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health,” page 99, 2002

<sup>25</sup> World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health,” page 100, 2002

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, page 99

Finally, we looked at data and literature on the health impact of youth dating abuse. Dating abuse is a public health problem and intimate partner violence is considered by many to be the primary public health problem for women. A brief fact sheet from the Family Violence Prevention Fund does a great job of summing up the primary health impacts of intimate partner violence by using the same categories as the Leading Health Indicators of Healthy People 2010<sup>27</sup>:

- Overweight and obesity There appears to be a strong correlation between eating disorders, morbid obesity and childhood sexual assault.
- Tobacco 52.8% of students reporting severe DV vs 34.2% who did not disclose were current smokers.
- Substance Use Girls who report abuse (physical or sexual) are more than 2 times as likely to drink and use illicit drugs.
- Responsible sexual behavior 28% of persons who have been in abusive relationships vs 12.9% of those who report no history of abuse reported having been pregnant or having caused a pregnancy. African American girls age 14-18 with history of dating abuse were 2.8 times more likely to have a sexually transmitted disease (STDs) ; 2.8 more likely to have non-monogamous male partners; and half as likely to use condoms
- Mental health Suicide ideation and attempts are 6-9 times more likely in girls reporting sexual or physical abuse by a partner. Higher incidence of depression, sleep disorders and PTSD in adult women victims of intimate partner violence.

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<sup>27</sup> Fact Sheet: Intimate Partner Violence and Healthy People 2010 Fact Sheet, Family Violence Prevention Fund, from website, [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)



- Injury and Violence 24% of female students age 15-20 with 1 or more violent acts in dating relationship report incident such as rape or use of weapon against them.
- Immunizations Children of abused women are less likely to have complete and up to date immunizations than other children.
- Access to Health Care 22% with a history of abuse vs 7.5% without a history of abuse of teen moms started prenatal care in third trimester.

In the realm of mental health, researchers have found that teenagers who have suffered from abuse are more likely to exhibit depressive symptoms and low self-esteem as well as other mental health disorders<sup>28</sup>. Additionally, our search found that age 14 is a young woman's year of greatest risk of sexual assault; and that other health damaging behavior is more prevalent in females experiencing youth dating abuse, such as smoking, substance use, pregnancy, STDs, suicide attempts, unhealthy weight loss.<sup>29</sup>

Jay G. Silverman, et al found in a study of over 4,200 high school girls in Massachusetts in 1997 and 1999 that dating abuse is "extremely prevalent among this population, and adolescent girls who report a history of dating

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<sup>28</sup> NASW, Adolescent Health, "What Social Workers Should Know about Gender Based Violence and the Health of Adolescent Girls," Vol 1, No 2, July 2001 (website)

<sup>29</sup> NASW, Adolescent Health, "What Social Workers Should Know about Gender Based Violence and the Health of Adolescent Girls," Vol 1, No 2, July 2001 (website)

violence are more likely to exhibit other serious health risk behaviors.”<sup>30</sup>

Additionally Silverman et al found that:

- Adolescent girls who reported abuse from dating partners were at elevated risk for use of alcohol, tobacco and cocaine (3-5 x more likely on cocaine); engage in unhealthy weight control (3-4 times more likely—use laxatives, vomiting); unsafe sexual behavior, including first intercourse before 15 yrs and multiple partnering; have been pregnant (4-6x more likely); and seriously consider or attempt suicide (8-9 x more likely to attempt). Risks were higher for girls reporting both physical and sexual abuse.

In a study specifically looking at the health of African American teen girls, the authors note that<sup>31</sup>:

- Dating violence reported was by 18.4%
- Those with dating violence history were 2.8 times more likely to have a sexually transmitted disease (STD); 2.8 times more likely to have a non-monogamous partner, and half as likely to use condoms consistently. These same girls were more likely to fear consequences of negotiating condom use; fear talking to partner about pregnancy prevention; have higher perceived risk of acquiring an STD; perceive less control over sexuality; have peer norms non-supportive of condom use; and peer norms non-supportive of healthy relationships.

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<sup>30</sup> Jay G. Silverman, et al, “Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality,” JAMA, Aug 1, 2001, Vol 286, No 5, pg 575-579

<sup>31</sup> Gina M. Wingood et al, “Dating Violence and the Sexual Health of Black Adolescent Females,” Pediatrics, Vol 107, No 5, May 2001

The authors of this study conclude “adolescents who have experienced dating violence are more likely to exhibit a spectrum of unhealthy sexual behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and norms.”<sup>32</sup> This parallels study findings for adult women. Further, in terms of preventive interventions, Rickert, et al suggest that interventions to reduce youth dating abuse will probably also reduce unintended teen pregnancies, HIV and other STDs in adolescents.<sup>33</sup>

**Goal 4: Prevent team will compile information on best practices for primary prevention of dating violence**

The Louisville Prevent Team examined a host of available sources to determine best and promising practices that are currently being used to prevent dating abuse and rape/sexual assault among adolescents and young adults.

From an ecological model, a comprehensive youth dating abuse primary prevention effort would target each of the following areas: intra-personal (e.g. self-esteem, personal belief system, personal experiences, biological components), interpersonal (e.g. communication, limit-setting and limit-respecting), organizational (e.g. policies, procedures, enforcement, resources and responses), community (e.g. awareness, attitudes, structures),

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Rickert, Vaughn et al, “Adolescent Dating Violence and Date Rape,” Current Opinion in Obstetrics and Gynecology, 14 (5):495-500, October 2002.

societal/policy (e.g. laws, policies, political will). The current efforts in Louisville are focused almost exclusively on the relational level.

The Prevent Team found no community and no models that put the full ecological model into practice. Most research that has been done (research is seen by this group as one measure of best practices) has examined the efficacy of educational programs (primarily school or college based) targeting youth and young adults. The best practices of educational curricula appear to address the first 2 levels of the ecological framework – interpersonal and relational. Model curricula (of which there are several) appear to help youth and young adults to both feel better about themselves, while also addressing knowledge, attitudes and/or skills to improve their dating relationships. These educational programs tend to attempt to address one or more of three indicators of success – attitudes about dating abuse or rape/sexual assault; knowledge (of the issues, of available resources, of the dynamics of dating abuse and/or rape/sexual assault, of the impact, etc.), and skills (to identify abuse early on, to leave a relationship in which they're being abused, to assist and support a friend who is being abused, to not be abusive within a dating relationship, etc). The model curricula that have been identified varied in the degree to which they addressed all three levels, with the bulk of the efforts appearing to focus on attitude and knowledge. The *SouthSide Teens About Respect (S.T.A.R.)* project out of Chicago, IL; *SafeDates* from North Carolina, and the *Youth Relationship Program* from Ontario, according to some measures, appeared to demonstrate the most

improvement on the most indicators (increase knowledge about dating abuse, change attitudes that justify/are supportive of dating abuse, increase used of school-based and community anti-violence programs, decreased verbal/physical aggression within a dating relationship, increase help-seeking behavior, change gender role stereotyping, improve conflict management skills.)

In the literature review done by the Prevent Team, the majority (almost all of them) of the curricula addressed dating abuse exclusively with few addressing rape/sexual assault. The Prevent Team found very few curricula that addressed exclusively rape/sexual assault.

Secondarily, the Prevent Team did a literature review about the elements of a strong primary prevention effort for youth dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. Youth dating abuse can be understood conceptually as a sub-set of teen violence in general. Much more work has been done in the areas of teen violence prevention generally than has been done seen in the specific areas of youth dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. As such, the Prevent Team examined some of the data on best practices of teen violence prevention with a consideration towards how those best practices and theoretical models may be applied to dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. There is some evidence that, because teen violence is such a complex public health and community justice issue, a broad, multi-layered and multiple effort approach is indicated. *Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention: A Sourcebook for Community Action*, 2002 by DHHS and CDC), for example, found that 4 strategies in particular

showed some promise in reducing the incidence of youth violence: parent and family-based strategies, home-visiting strategies, social-cognitive strategies, and mentoring strategies. Utilizing a community-wide strategy that incorporates aspects of all of these forms of interventions seems to show some promise in youth violence prevention. Because parent interactions between themselves and with their children appears to be a predictor in youth violence (Webster-Stratton, 1997), then working with parents and families in an engaging process to examine and improve their interaction could help to reduce youth violence.

Given that some evidence suggests exposure to domestic violence places youth and young adults at somewhat higher risk for perpetrating date abuse (Foo and Margolin, 1995) (the evidence that exposure to domestic violence places youth at higher risk for being victimized is contradictory and inconclusive – see Carlson, 1990 and Stets-Pirog-Good, 1987), this approach seems to be applicable to working to prevent dating abuse and rape/sexual assault among adolescents and young adults. Regardless of the strength of the link between exposure to domestic violence and experiencing or perpetrating dating abuse or rape/sexual assault, it seems clear that all youth can benefit from frank, honest, and gender specific conversations from parents about healthy dating, boundary setting, infusing respect into the flirting and dating process and could help to reduce dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. Evidence from binge drinking prevention with first semester college students is instructive in this regard. Some data indicates that encouraging parents to sit down with students the summer before

their first semester in college and talking with them about binge drinking, the dangers thereof, and how to drink more responsibly reduces the incidence of binge drinking during that first semester. Combining these two areas suggests that teaching parents to have direct conversations with their children about healthy and respectful dating may have some promise in reducing dating abuse and rape/sexual assault.

Although home visiting strategies have also demonstrated some promise in reducing teen violence, because there is no evidence that there is such an entity as a “high risk family” for youth who perpetrate or are victimized by dating abuse or rape/sexual assault, this strategy seems unlikely to result in any promising practices for the Louisville Prevent Efforts unless resources were available to blanket the intervention to all families with children of a certain age range, which is highly unlikely.

*Best Practices of Youth Violence Prevention* identified social-cognitive strategies as another means to prevent youth violence. Assuming that violence is at least in part socially learned, these techniques seek to “...equip children with the skills they need to deal effectively with difficult social situations...” (P. #119). The social-cognitive approach works best (according to *Best Practices*) when they consider the cultural and demographic context, select an appropriate setting and involve various sectors of the community (school, parents, clergy, and others). These kinds of efforts address the attitudes and beliefs of the youth, and focus

on helping them develop concrete skills (negotiation, critical thinking, decision-making, non-violent conflict resolution, etc.). In addition, other criteria have been identified as important aspects (see Aber et al, 1996, Wiist, Jackson and Jackson, 1996, Orpinas et al, 1996, Hausmann, Peirce and Briggs, 1996; Huesmann, et al 1996; and Greene, 1998):

- Involve teachers and principals from the beginning
- Use the language that youth use with their peers
- Include role-playing and small-group exercises to practice and develop automatic responses;
- Include cross-cultural content to encourage youth to tolerate differences and value others' points of views
- Teach youth about risk factors and triggers that can lead to violent confrontation.

As described in the executive summary, one of the theoretical frameworks for understanding and addressing dating abuse and rape/sexual assault is the social-cognitive perspective. As such, some of these practices designed for general violence prevention could have promise in addressing dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. While conflict resolution skills are seen as a crucial aspect of most violence prevention efforts for youth violence generally, these efforts are seen as not appropriate, and potentially more harmful, in the context of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. As such, the Prevent Team will not recommend primary prevention efforts that highlight or involve conflict resolution or mediation



tactics. The rest of the suggestions in this area, however, are worth examining as possible practices for addressing dating abuse and rape/sexual assault.

Using the language of the people with whom we're working (as well as age and developmentally appropriate language); engaging teachers, parents, youth ministers, coaches and other adults who work directly with youth on an ongoing basis in the program as it is developed; developing role-playing and small-group exercises; addressing cross-cultural factors to ensure that youth and young adults do not use culture as an excuse for abusive behaviors; and teaching youth risk and protective factors all seem like valuable approaches to consider in developing a comprehensive dating abuse prevention effort for dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. The Prevent Team did not find any literature or practices that incorporated these efforts specifically in regards to teen dating abuse and rape/sexual assault.

Finally, *Best Practices* examines mentoring programs as an effective strategy for curbing youth violence. According to the data, mentoring as a means of providing positive adult role modeling for youth is an effective means of reducing violence (Sipe, 1996). Although the Prevent Team found no mention in the literature and no practices that currently use mentoring as a technique for dating abuse and rape/sexual assault prevention, conceptually it appears to be a technique worth exploring further. To have adults talk with and interact closely with youth in a way that encourages male youth to put respect into practice when

flirting and dating; and young women and men to set and enforce their own personal limits, what to look for in terms of subtle forms of abuse and control, and where and how to ask for support, seems to be a valuable potential tool in preventing dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. Given that there is data to suggest that boys who grow up with fathers who hold and support attitudes that condone dating abuse are more likely to perpetrate dating abuse or rape/sexual assault (see as one example, Pope and Englar-Carlson, 2001), then one aspect of a dating abuse and rape/sexual assault prevention effort could be developing programs for male mentors and for fathers to talk with their sons about being respectful in their dating.

Turning to what the literature says specifically about dating abuse and rape/sexual assault prevention, the Prevent Team found no consensus on the content of dating abuse, domestic violence or rape/sexual assault prevention (University of Calgary). Similarly, there is a wide variety of methods used to present the material to youth within schools (role plays, exercises, small group discussions, peer education, theatre, video watching, etc.). Most of the efforts that have been evaluated are school-based and curricula-based prevention efforts. There are few efforts that evaluate the use of mass media and public awareness campaigns, and none that were identified that evaluated policy or social change efforts on a large scale. As such, the efforts of the Prevent Team to identify model programs and best practices for a full effort using the ecological are limited.

The data on the effectiveness of school-based, curricula-based educational is mixed. The clear evidence is that these methods are much better than one-time presentations, but the long-term effectiveness of actually reducing the incidence of dating abuse or rape/sexual assault in the schools in which they have been implemented has not yet been demonstrated. As Schewe (2000) found, for most of these programs, the positive effects tend to fade after weeks or months.

Largely, the efforts that have been demonstrated as best practice approaches focus on some combination of 3 primary indicators – attitudes, knowledge and behavior (Meyer & Stein, undated, Schewe, 2000; University of Calgary, 2001).

Taken together the best practices seem to include the following:

- Target the whole population for prevention efforts,
- Avoid confrontation, blaming men, or blaming victims,
- In mixed-gender audience use gender-neutral tone
- Introduce skills training early in program (effective communication, conflict resolution, anger management);
- Focus on attitude change;
- Peer counseling components are important;
- Incorporate program into existing structures;
- Tailor presentations to audiences by age, gender, [culture];
- Use local statistics and facts;

- Focus on increasing positive behaviors and attitudes not just decreasing negative ones;
- Use various presentation methods;
- Do multiple sessions, with booster sessions;
- Base program on theory (no particular theory was found to be more effective than others – the important point is to base the program on a theory and stick with it)

Other research has demonstrated that separating men from women and developing gender-specific educational programs tend to be more effective for both women and men participating in the program. The effectiveness of mixed-gender educational programs appears to be more effective for males in those settings than for females, but only for certain indicators (such as increased empathy for girls/women).

In terms of educating males specifically, Kilmartin (2001) and Berkowitz (2001) have both indicated that for college men, a fundamental component of working to address rape/sexual assault with men includes critically examining masculinities (see also Connell). It would seem that although speaking specifically about college men and rape/sexual assault, this same base would apply to high school age men and to dating abuse content as well.

On a slightly different theoretical tract, the Prevent Team also examined some of the literature on social capital – particularly as related to youth social capital. Social capital involves “...social networks, civic engagement and confidence” (Kemenade, et al, 2003, p #1). Conceptually, using social capital as a means to decrease the incidence of dating abuse and rape/sexual assault holds some promise. The theory of social capital holds that strengthening social network, increasing civic engagement and helping to develop confidence among a citizenry is an effective means of strengthening the community. Social capital approaches have been used in a variety of settings and varied communities to address a number of social ills. It can be speculated that by engaging these same approaches to strengthen the sense of community and connectedness for youth, positive behaviors and attitudes may be enhanced and negative and harmful attitudes and behaviors may be decreased via community censorship. Strengthening the social network of young men, embedded with values that hold respect for women and girls as a core, might improve men’s attitudes and behavior towards girls. Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997) demonstrate the role of male social support in the commission of sexual assaults on college campuses. According to this research, men on college campuses who perpetrate sexual assault exist in an environment in which they interact most consistently with other men who hold, practice and promote rape-supporting attitudes (women as sexual objects, sex as a contest or a conquest, acceptance of rape myths, rigid belief in stereotypical gender roles, etc.). Fostering a community that supports positive, respectful views and attitudes of gender equity

might also influence the behavior of young men in a positive manner. The Men of Strength Clubs by Men Can Stop Rape, Inc (see below) are just such a practice that appears to show some promise in this regard.

Additionally, preliminary research has been done on women's status and social capital. In a paper by the Institute for Women's Policy Research, Amy Caiazza and Robert Putnam posit that social capital is significantly related to women's overall status in a community.<sup>34</sup> Civic engagement and participation are a proxy for social capital in these studies. Of the factors analyzed to determine women's civic engagement, women's sense of safety was one of the most important factors in determining their level of civic participation and engagement. Interestingly, for men feeling less safe is not an impediment to participation, in fact, feeling safe makes men less likely to participate. This supports the need for a holistic, ecological approach to violence prevention. Indeed, this preliminary research would lead us to believe that safety is a crucial factor in women's civic and political participation, hence in their overall status.<sup>35</sup>

Using social capital theory in public health arenas, however, needs to be done with some caution, as Muntaner et al (2000) indicate. However, some of the ideas and components included in social capital theory could play a role in the

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<sup>34</sup> Amy Caiazza, PhD, and Robert D. Putnam, PhD, "Women's Status and Social Capital Across the States," Institute for Women's Policy Research, July 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Amy Caiazza, PhD, "Women's Community Involvement" The Effects of Money, Safety, Parenthood, and Friends," Institute for Women's Policy Research, September 2001.

development of primary prevention programs for dating abuse and rape/sexual assault.

Another promising approach to engaging men is the bystander approach. According to the bystander theory, men who are troubled by other men's attitudes and behavior do not challenge or interrupt those attitudes or behavior because they assume that more men support them than feel as they do. By encouraging men to move from bystanders (standing by while such behavior occurs) to allies (openly challenging attitudes and behavior that support dating abuse or rape/sexual assault) more men find room and space to act in kind (Berkowitz, 2001).

In addition to the literature review, the Prevent Team also examined some promising programs that are addressing dating abuse and/or rape/sexual assault. The Prevent Team identified several model efforts that are currently ongoing, but few that are engaged in the full ecological model.

The Massachusetts Department of Education, for example, has developed model guidelines for schools to address youth dating abuse. These guidelines include a teen dating violence advisory board – to assist the Department of Education in developing an appropriate response to youth dating abuse. It also has a comprehensive policy that recognizes the multiple ways that dating abuse occurs and the patterned nature of this form of abuse (as different from general school

violence or bullying dynamics). This policy also provides written policy recommendations for local schools boards, guidelines for responding to victims and perpetrators of dating abuse as a teen safety plan, and guidelines for how schools can respond to restraining orders that a student may get against another student (something that a student in KY would be hard pressed to do.) The Massachusetts Department guidelines for schools to youth dating abuse could serve as a working model program for other schools.

The Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board has developed a packet for educators to address dating abuse (sexual assault is only addressed within the context of dating abuse) that is made available through the Michigan Department of Education to local school districts, educators, and community partners. This packet includes tools designed to: build student awareness about dating abuse; give students the ability to recognize warning signs; offer emergency and ongoing help; and promote non-controlling, non-violent behaviors among teens. Specifically, the packet includes sample posters (adopted from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence – see below), model lesson plans (based on a 3-day discussion about dating abuse), educator sheets, and student surveys and handouts. That packet of materials is a model of concrete, specific resources geared towards teachers in schools on how to address dating abuse with youth. The information provided appears to lack any kind of gender-specific language (i.e. how to talk with boys as opposed to girls about this topic) as well as anything on same-sex relationships or other



cultural sub-groups. However, as a model, it is worth exploring the development of a similar packet to deliver to Jefferson County schools (public and private) with an expansion to gender and culture-specific resources.

San Diego, California has Peer Courts to respond to dating abuse. Although not a part of a primary prevention effort, the San Diego Peer Court does provide a model for a comprehensive effort to address youth dating abuse on the local level. The Peer Court identifies and trains youth to perform the roles of prosecuting and defense attorneys, bailiff, clerk and jurors to sentence other youth who are first time juvenile offenders. This is an example of an empowering process to engage youth in developing solutions to the problems that affect them the most – and can be seen as an example of putting some aspects of the social capital theory described above into practice.

The Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence has developed what is widely recognized as a promising model of a public awareness campaign. This multi-media awareness campaign utilized billboards, posters (for schools, youth clubs, etc.), and public service announcements (both TV and radio) in a coordinated manner to address teen dating abuse and healthy relationships. Although lacking in outcome data to evaluate its effectiveness, anecdotal responses from Rhode Island suggest that this campaign was an effective means of engaging youth and youth did remember the messages that were a part of these campaigns. One way to strengthen the efficacy of media campaigns such

as this is to connect curricula content to youth or young adults that reinforces and expands upon the same themes that are part of the media campaign (Wallack, et al 1993, Klein, 2001, see also Salmon, Post and Christensen, 2003).

Massachusetts has developed “See it and Stop it” -- a multi-media public awareness campaign that shows some promising practices. This effort, developed by teens in Massachusetts (the Teach Action Campaign, Inc.), uses the web as a point of entry, but also has packets of information (posters, flyers, and other awareness materials) to encourage teens to “see it, stop it, and get organized.” By being developed by teens it provides teenagers an opportunity to develop their understanding of the issues as well as their leadership skills. The materials are written in a gender-neutral manner which perpetuates the myth that dating abuse is gender neutral. In addition, there are no gender-specific ideas about what male youth vs female youth could do to respond. However, much of the content seems very strong and the process of using teens to develop awareness materials for teens seems like a promising practice.

Men Can Stop Rape, Inc. in Washington DC has a promising model for engaging male youth in the effort to combat rape/sexual assault. These efforts include a mass media campaign (“Our Strength is Not for Hurting”) and male youth clubs (“men of strength clubs”). Although not technically developed as joint components of a comprehensive effort, they do operate on some levels as such. The media campaign targets men (especially male youth by using local sports

stars) to model men listening to and respecting women's sexual boundaries. The clubs provide a venue for male youth to explore what it means for them to be men and how to practice aspects of their masculinity. Imbedded in this effort is how they treat each other and girls and women.

Johns Hopkins University and House of Ruth (A local domestic violence service agency) in Baltimore, Maryland developed an arts-based education and prevention program for addressing dating abuse. Some of the preliminary data from this effort indicates that it is a successful model of engaging youth and developing programming that raises the awareness and changes some attitudes of other youth. In addition, the project as a whole appears to utilize some promising practices including engaging youth directly in the development of efforts targeting youth to stop dating abuse. By engaging youth through the arts, this program encourages critical thinking about healthy relationships as well as developing youth leaders in addressing the issues.

Voices Against Violence at the University of Texas at Austin borrows heavily from the work of Augusto Boal and the "Theatre of the Oppressed." Voices Against Violence is a 2-semester course in which students use the first semester to learn the theory and techniques of theatre of the oppressed along with the feminist theory and the dynamics of rape/sexual assault and dating abuse. The spring semester is spent doing performance-presentations throughout the campus and the broader community. All of the skits and scenarios are developed by the

students. Boal's work emphasizes theatrical techniques that are designed to bring audiences into the performance and force dialogue about the issues. For example, during a performance, the Voices Against Violence troop allows audiences to force the actors to pause and enter into a dialogue (although not with the actors) about what they see going on. If audience members have a suggestion about what one of the characters should do differently, they are invited to take the place of the actor and try out their suggestion. The arts are a powerful means to engage audiences into the discussion, and the format designed by Boal and used by Voices Against Violence provide some promising practices of ways to engage audiences, and increase awareness and empathy.

**Goal 5: Prevent team will identify and collect existing policies and legislation relevant to dating violence**

At the state level, Kentucky law does not have specific language addressing youth dating abuse. The closest area is domestic violence law, which Kentucky defines as physical injury, serious physical injury, sexual abuse, assault, or the infliction of fear of imminent physical injury, serious physical injury, sexual abuse, or assault between family members or members of an unmarried couple Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) 403.720).

<p><b><u>Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 403-720 (1992):</u></b> (2) <i>“Family member” means a spouse, including a former spouse, a parent, a child, a stepchild, or any other person related by consanguinity or affinity</i></p>
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*within the second degree; and*

*(3) “Member of an unmarried couple” means each member of an unmarried couple which allegedly has a child in common, any children of that couple, or a member of an unmarried couple who are living together or have formerly lived to together.*

**Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 403-725 (1996):** *(1) Any family member or member of an unmarried couple who is a resident of this state or has fled to this state to escape domestic violence and abuse may file a verified petition in the District Court of the county in which he resides. (3) A petition filed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section may be filed by the family member or member of an unmarried couple seeking relief or by an adult family member or member of an unmarried couple on behalf of a minor family member.*

Although the law is written to include both married and unmarried couples, the safety mechanisms that are written as part of this law are not as universal. Protective Orders in the state of Kentucky, for example, require that the couple either be living together, married or share a child in common. For dating partners who do not meet these requirements (such as most teenagers and youth) there is limited ability for getting a protective order. According to the language of the statute, an unmarried teen cannot file for relief on their own unless she (or he) has a child with the dating partner or has lived with him (or her).

A review of other state legislation yielded the following results:

- All 50 states and DC have laws against dating abuse behaviors like sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, but the dating abuse/violence term is almost never used<sup>36</sup>.
- In 39 states and DC victims of dating abuse can apply for protective orders; age requirements and language of laws vary by state<sup>37</sup>.
- A major inconsistency from state to state is the use of terminology; consistent definitions are not used in policy or law relating to dating abuse/violence. There is a definite need to define dating, abuse, violence, assault, youth, etc.
- Some state legislation includes dating abuse in some of its laws and not in others.

In regards to protective orders:

- 28 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico allow dating partners to obtain protective orders, but only 17 allow minors of a dating relationship to apply for protective orders. Eight of these allow minors to get orders on their own, while others require adult intervention. In Oklahoma and Washington state a 16 or 17 year old may apply alone.<sup>38</sup>
- State legislation differs by: age of person filing order; permissive or mandatory adult involvement; age of recipient of order (adult or minor); definitions of minor, of abuse, of dating relationship, etc.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> NCVC, Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet, website

<sup>37</sup> NCVC, Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet, website

<sup>38</sup> NCVC, Dating Violence, website

<sup>39</sup> NCVC, Dating Violence, website

In Kentucky, actions relating to intimate partner violence can be taken under civil law and criminal law. Results from one will not affect the other and the cases are handled by separate courts and require separate court appearances. In the case of civil law, the civil domestic violence action court is asked to resolve conflict between two parties, not asking the court to punish abuser; in the case of criminal law, a criminal complaint petitioner is charging the abuser with a crime and seeking to have abuser receive jail term, fine, probation or a combination of these. In criminal law, a person can be charged with any crime in the Penal code within the context of domestic violence. However, this may be different for minors who are generally charged under the Juvenile Justice system and not in the adult system. In Kentucky an Emergency Protective Order (EPO) offers temporary protection, without the abuser being present (ex parte) for the process, but the EPO is not effective or enforceable until it is served to the abuser by law enforcement. EPOs lasts 14 days; can be reissued, and have no fees. A Domestic Violence Order (DVO) is a longer-term version of the EPO. The DVO can last up to 3 years and can be extended. Additionally, a person may also file a criminal complaint. Again, all of these recourses are limited for minors who must be accompanied by an adult to file civil or criminal charges.<sup>40</sup> In addition, because the requirement of the EPO and DVO is that the parties be married, share a child or be living together, few adolescents or young adults are able to access these resources.

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<sup>40</sup> From womenslaw.org

In the United States, a few states do refer to dating abuse specifically in their statutes: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota (for protective orders), Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon (respondent must be 18 or older), Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington (16 or older), West Virginia.<sup>41</sup> Based on this information, the Prevent Team is in the process of researching and identifying model legislation with regards to dating abuse and rape/sexual assault as pertaining to adolescents and young adults.

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) has relatively clear definitions of sexual harassment, sexual abuse and assault, and assault with distinct provisions at varying levels of discipline if these codes are violated (JCPS Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline and the Student Bill of Rights). However, the relationship between perpetrator and victim is not defined in these policies, therefore dating abuse itself is not addressed. This has real implications in that the dynamics of dating abuse suggest that partners can behave in ways that would violate the policy off campus, and in other ways (threatening or intimidating ways) that aren't a violation of school policy but are still abusive while on campus. Furthermore, there is no clear policy in JCPS for the provision of support services for youth who are abused. Finally, there is no provision that we could find in JCPS policies for the support of protective or restraining order (should a teen be able to obtain one) while on campus. JCPS has clear policies on progressive discipline for Sexual Intimidation/Harassment or Interference with

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<sup>41</sup> NCVC, Dating Violence Laws, Statutory overview (current as of 1999 only)



School Personnel/Staff/Students (Including Sexual Harassment, Exhibitionism, or Inappropriate Exposure of Body Parts), Assault/Sexual Abuse/Sexual Assault, and Inappropriate Sexual Behavior (Includes Consensual Sexual Contact and All Sexual Offenses Except Assault). Although all infractions are to be reported, it is up to the Building Principal as to how to proceed with individual cases. Because there is no common practice or model policy within JCPS, the responses vary greatly not only from school to school, but also from situation to situation within the same school.

While JCPS does have curricula that teach basic social and life skills (assertiveness, healthy relationships, etc.), there are none that specifically address dating abuse. Prevention programs vary widely from school to school – thus there is no uniformity either in the content or access to such programs. Although dating abuse is clearly a significant problem with severe affects , JCPS has no standardized training for staff on dating abuse or how to respond to dating abuse.

Addressing dating abuse is even more complicated on the college level. There is no statewide standard for the development of dating abuse policies for college campuses. Although the federal government does require all colleges and universities that receive federal dollars to have a policy addressing rape/sexual assault (including outlining how the campus will respond to allegations of rape/sexual assault, support the person who was victimized, hold the offender

accountable, report incidents that occur on campus, and provide education on prevention) there are no parallel requirements to address dating abuse. Furthermore, there are limited accountability structures or sanctions offered by the federal government to ensure that these policies are actually being implemented on campuses. In Louisville, there is one major university (University of Louisville) and several smaller colleges and universities, including Jefferson County Community College, which has 3 campuses. This conglomeration public and private campuses have as many policies and protocols addressing rape/sexual assault and dating abuse as there are campuses. The Prevent Team was not able to collect samples of these policies. It is unclear, based on what the Prevent Team has discovered so far, the degree to which any prevention efforts are occurring on the college campuses in Louisville, much less how effective those efforts are. The University of Louisville (U of L) does have the PEACC program on campus that addresses campus violence prevention efforts and awareness (this is described in more detail in Goal 6). Additionally, a variety of services at the U of L campus are made available to students including: university police, police escorts upon request, crime reports, sexual harassment office through the Human Resources office, and a number of educational programs such as PEACC, RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) Self Defense Classes for women, and Sexual Assault Prevention Committee. Finally, a campus survey study was conducted to ascertain student, faculty and staff perceptions of safety on campus.<sup>42</sup> Some of the key findings

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<sup>42</sup> Campus Survey Report: Safety Perception and Experiences of Violence, Linda K. Bledsoe, Ph.D., Bibhuti K. Sar, MSW, Ph.D., Kent Schools of Social Work, University of Louisville

from this study can be informative as the Prevent Team explores recommendations and action plans for college campuses.

The Prevent team has identified (at least on the state level) the Massachusetts Department of Education as having a promising model policy and protocol for addressing teen dating abuse within its schools. This policy, and the protocols that flow from it, focus exclusively on dating abuse, and addressing rape/sexual assault only within this context. This model policy has as one of its strengths, for example, a youth dating abuse advisory board – to assist the Department of education in developing an appropriate response to youth dating abuse. It also has a comprehensive policy that recognizes the multiple ways that dating abuse occurs and the patterned nature of this form of abuse (as different from general school violence or bullying dynamics). This policy also provides written policy recommendations for local schools boards, guidelines for responding to victims and perpetrators of dating abuse as a teen safety plan, and guidelines for how schools can respond to restraining orders that a student may get against another student (something that a student in KY would be hard pressed to do.)

Policies and legislation are an important component of prevention as research studies have found that “societies with the lowest levels of partner violence were those that had community sanctions against partner violence and those where abuse women had access to sanctuary...”<sup>43</sup> This “sanctions and sanctuary”

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<sup>43</sup> World Health Organization, “World Report on Violence and Health,” page 99, 2002

framework provides that community sanctions, whether in the form of legal sanctions or moral norms, offer protection and possibly prevent violence against women.<sup>44</sup>

**Goal 6: Prevent team will identify and collect information on availability and status of services and programs in Louisville Metro addressing dating violence**

There are a handful of organizations that address dating abuse and rape/sexual assault for our primary target population.

**The Center for Women and Families** provides comprehensive support services to address rape/sexual assault, domestic violence and economic hardship. These comprehensive services include 24-hour hotline, shelter services, transitional housing, non-residential counseling and therapy, hospital accompaniment, legal accompaniment, children support services, and a full array of educational and training programs. The Center's services are available to youth under the age of 18 with parental permission, although the experience of the Center is that youth are reticent to use the services without specific and sustained outreach efforts. The Center was instrumental in launching the Teen Dating Violence Network – a citywide multi-organizational effort to create a comprehensive coordinated effort to response to teen dating abuse and rape/sexual assault. The Center's educational efforts are perhaps the City's

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid

most comprehensive in terms of working with youth around dating abuse and rape/sexual assault.

**U of L PEACC (Prevention Education and Advocacy on Campus and in the Community) Program** provides services to address rape/sexual assault, domestic and dating abuse and stalking on the University of Louisville Campus and for students, faculty and staff of the University of Louisville. By definition, these services primarily target young adults within the age range of the Prevent Team's efforts. PEACC offers counseling and support services and educational programs to combat and respond to these issues.

**Planned Parenthood of Louisville** has an educational program that includes information on teen dating abuse. PPL also has peer educators who are trained to address teen dating abuse. Because dating abuse is a component of broader curricula, the focus on dating abuse appears somewhat limited, albeit of high quality.

**Jefferson County Board of Education** includes a limited amount of domestic and dating abuse information in their Health Curricula. From the information that the Prevent Team was able to obtain, it appears that whether the domestic violence module is addressed and how it is addressed is up to the discretion of each individual teacher.

**Youth Help Line** is a service of Seven County Services (a local nonprofit, social service agency) that provides a helpline geared for youth that is available during evening hours. It is primarily a referral service helping youth to identify the

issues and referring them on to the agency or resource that is able help them most directly.

There are also a handful of other less organized and well-defined educational programs or interventions in the community with the goal of informing and educating youth about healthy relationships and violence in relationships. There are specific efforts aimed at the Latino community in Louisville sponsored by the Center for Women and Families as well as through a local Catholic church and through the Girl Scouts. This year, two local high schools received funding from local government to address dating abuse in their schools through a peer education program and through an awareness piece where high school students will design billboards addressing dating abuse.

Based on this review, there are some preliminary services and resources available to respond to issues of youth dating abuse. By and large, the bulk of these services are in the educational realm. There are a smaller number of resources and services to respond to youth who have been abused (substantially more when a person reaches the age of majority), and almost nothing for teenagers who are abusive.

For the purposes of this project, with a focus on prevention efforts, the current educational efforts provide the best foundation upon which to build additional and more comprehensive efforts. The current educational efforts offered (by any

agency) address domestic violence/dating abuse and rape/sexual assault from the perspective of talking with mixed gender groups based on what girls and women need to know. Little thought has been given to what it is about these topics that boys and men need to know, how that may be different than what girls and women need to know, and how to tailor and present this information to boys and men. Until very recently in Louisville, there was no programming designed for boys or men about dating/domestic violence and rape/sexual assault.

**Goal 7: Prevent team will review, organize and analyze collected data and information on dating violence**

See the narrative of Goal 2 and 3 above.

**Goal 8: Prevent team members will identify and contact local service providers and interested community members to participate as partners and collaborators in the Prevent project**

The Louisville Prevent Team has identified a number of additional partners who have agreed to participate in the ongoing efforts to develop a comprehensive primary prevention effort in Metro Louisville. These partners include:

- Americana Community Center (a social-service, health and education agency primarily serving recent immigrants into Louisville);
- Seven Counties Services (a large non-profit social service agency in Louisville with a large prevention effort);

- U of L PEACC Program (U of L is the major university in Louisville and the PEACC program is their project to address domestic and dating abuse, rape/sexual assault and stalking);
- CWF Legal Services (who will also assist with making contact with Louisville Metro Police Department);
- Louisville Metro Health Department;
- Youth Helpline (a hotline available in the community for youth);

By expanding the committee beyond the five original partners, and bringing in additional organizations and their resources, the Prevent Team feels that we increase the likelihood of effectively launching the recommendations identified at the end of this report and maximizing the perspectives and knowledge –base that has and will continue to inform the resulting recommendations. We are aware of other potential partners that we plan to outreach to – youth ministers, the Louisville Metro Police Department, representatives of the judicial branch, etc. These efforts are ongoing and expanding.

**Goal 9: Prevent team will assess the current availability and the potential availability of human and financial resources at the local, state and national level**

The Prevent Team continues to assess the resources available to help with the development of this project and the implementation of the recommendations outlined below.



**Goal 10: Prevent team will draft a needs assessment report with a set of recommendations on how to best implement dating violence primary prevention efforts in Louisville, Kentucky.**

This report is the draft and basis for the report described in Goal 10. We plan to use the feedback we receive from the Prevent process (culminating with the feedback at the conference on Aug 1 – 3, 2005) and finalize a report that will be offered to the Louisville community in a public event during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October). In addition to refining this report based on the feedback we receive, the Prevent team will work to secure commitments to begin implementing the recommendations developed from this effort.

**Goal 11: Prevent team will assess cultural and political readiness and will to implement the primary prevention program recommended in the report coming out of Goal 10.**

The Prevent Team has only just begun this process. Once the draft of this report is completed and the recommendations are in a format that can be shared, the Prevent Team will work to further and more comprehensively address the cultural and political will to implement the recommendations.

## **NEXT STEPS AND EVALUATION**

Our immediate next steps are to continue to refine and focus this report so that it can be ready to be presented to the community in October as part of a coordinated community planning effort for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We will rewrite the report, further develop the recommendations, and plan for an event to release the report. In addition, we will meet with partners and potential partners, and begin developing a strategic plan to implement the recommendations.

One evaluation method will be to look over our goals and objectives and assess whether they were all achieved, if not why and what we have learned from unexpected obstacles we faced in achieving the goals and objectives. Once we have presented the broader community and key partners with the report and recommendations, we will monitor the adoption and implementation of such recommendations. If and when any are implemented, we will work collectively to play a role in making sure that evaluation is a part of any intervention. We will emphasize the importance and utility of evaluation data from interventions to inform and improve existing and emerging efforts.

Hopefully, in a few years we can look back to assess whether changes which this effort helped to catalyze have had the impact we hoped or intended them to and to find out what difference, if any, this project made in the team members individually, in the organizations of the team members, and in the broader

community in terms of preventing and even thinking about and discussing youth dating abuse.

## **LEADING FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL CHANGE**

- *How is this project leading to sustainable social change?*

Starting from the belief that true sustainable change must be authentic and driven from within communities, organizations, and individuals, this project is contributing to sustainable social change by challenging and educating individuals (team members and partners); by informing existing and developing prevention efforts at our organizations and organizations we work with; by increasing and enhancing cross-agency and multi disciplinary collaboration; by increasing the pool of knowledge about youth dating abuse in our community; and by creating a new product (needs assessment) that can be used by and incorporated into other efforts dealing with youth and violence prevention to move forward the evidence-based approach to interventions. Additionally, we have expanded our networks and connections via the Institute with other participants and Institute coaches and faculty creating new opportunities for sharing of resources and information as well as potential for collaboration. More concretely, we plan to hold a news conference and widely publicize the completion and release of the final report of the needs assessment in our community thus increasing the visibility of youth dating abuse as a priority issue in our community. This public presentation will be done with the support of our organizations which are individually and collectively held in esteem in our

community. This backing of key community players brings credibility to the work and draws attention to the need to address this issue. Finally, the intensity and commitment that was required for this project at an individual (personal and professional) and organizational level has caused all team members to ponder not only about the issue at hand but about the process, our role in this process, and our level and degree of commitment and responsibility to making change happen in our community.

- *Has your project lead to a transformational change rather than a technical fix to the problem?*

This question has brought diverse responses from the team members. On one hand, the more straightforward answer is that we will be evaluating this at a later point and we cannot tell at this point. However, due to the nature of this project (with one of its primary goals to increase the current state of knowledge to facilitate better decision-making) some of us would argue this is certainly a transformational change by way of increasing knowledge, challenging long-held assumptions and modus operandi, and pulling in partners (with the accompanying cultures, philosophies and work styles) that have not partnered before on such a non-task oriented project. In many ways, this project is as much about the process as about the product and in being so it is transformational.

- *How will this project prevent violence?*

Some of the answers from team members include:

- It will help our community to understand the impact of this violence on young people, identify local best practices, create a communitywide effort, and implement a primary prevention initiative.
- By opening our community's eyes to the issue and carrying out a research-based plan targeted to our community's needs.
- By increasing visibility of the issue.
- By bringing this conversation to the table in other projects and partnerships that each member is involved in.
- By incorporating more prominently into each of our organizations the need to address youth dating abuse as an issue on its own, while realizing that it is in fact also a part of the broader problems our (and every) community faces in terms of violence, prejudice, gender inequality, and other forms of bias.
- *What impact has your project had on*
  - *Team?* We have learned a great deal about optimizing everyone's skills and strengths while finding constructive ways to deal with frustrations and miscommunication. The project has made us have a better understanding of team dynamics, deal with confusion & transition, examine ourselves personally and professionally and pull together to accomplish our goals. It has also helped us mobilize a core of people that will help grow partners in this effort.

- *Organizations?* The project has provided an opportunity for a diverse group of organizations to come together to address a community issue. We have peaked some interests in our organizations as well as those of partners in the project in youth dating abuse as well as in the process of following an evidence-based needs assessment. It has also highlighted organizationally how much effort and time it takes to really focus on an issue.
- *Partnerships?* There are various levels of partnerships that have formed or strengthened as a result of this project. The first is that of the team members, with some organizations having meshed even more than others. Additionally, we have each reached out to other partners in the community and have thus created, enhanced or laid the groundwork for new partnerships.
- *Community/society?* It is too soon to know. But as a segment of the community, it has certainly begun the process of change in team members and partners. If change begins with individuals, then this project could indeed have an impact on the community as a whole. For now, we believe that the process and outcome of this project will affect each of us individually as well as our organizations in the way we conduct our work and the level and depth of our knowledge about youth dating abuse.

## CONCLUSIONS

- *What are 2-3 lessons the team learned as a result of this project, the Institute, about leadership to prevent violence?*
- To be effective, leadership needs to be a shared effort and process, with people using both formal leadership (such as authority) and informal leadership skills.
- We all have a role to play in preventing violence and it is through a shared process of team building that these roles become clarified and how people can choose to actualize their leadership becomes apparent.
- The team learned how much information and data that is and is not available on youth intimate partner violence. We learned what it's going to take to be successful. The Institute taught us a variety of models to address this issue and provided an opportunity to network with other groups across the country. We also learned about the challenges we face in engaging the community to raise awareness and address this issue.
- It's important to address team member leadership styles and spend time discussing this as a team early in the project.
- Primary prevention as it is distinguished from other prevention.
- It is imperative to first look within and face and challenge personal assumptions about violence, what a healthy relationship is, and gender role beliefs before setting out to prevent violence. One first needs to know and recognize what one and their team-members believe and take as "givens" before jumping to conclusions.

- *Team's future plans for project?*
- Use the final stages of the Prevent process to strengthen the report and final recommendations to create a final report that will be released to the local community in October as a Domestic Violence Awareness Month event.
- To expand the team to include additional partners and develop a strategic plan (including funding and evaluation efforts) to launch efforts that will fulfill the recommendations.
- Continuing to work together to raise community awareness of this issue, identifying local best practices and working to implement these prevention programs.
- To use this product to enhance and strengthen other community efforts related to violence prevention through collaboration and coordination.
- *Team's future plans for using lessons learned from Institute and project in other work?*
- The team will use these lessons to formulate our plan along with assisting us to address other issues within our community.
- As a team we not discussed future plans for using the lessons learned.
- Utilize the information and resources to work within our respective organizations to raise awareness and infuse dating abuse best practices into their existing curricula and projects.



- Integrate lessons and skills learned or relearned into every day work and interactions with other professionals and community members on prevention work.
- To keep the awareness and introspection about leadership and personal leadership styles alive as a useful tool for self-assessment and personal development.
- *What else do we need to move forward with the project?*
- Funding and securing the political will of those agencies that will be most involved (i.e. local police department, Department of Health, local nonprofits who work in the area, the school board, etc.)
- We need to raise community awareness, continue to identify successful models and continue to work together to build a community-wide coalition.
- A strengthened common vision of what we want to achieve as a team not just as individuals representing organizations.
- *How has this experience changes your approach to violence prevention?*
- To think and plan more strategically.
- It has opened my eyes wider to the issue and I have become more passionate about breaking the cycle of violence in our youth.
- This experience provided more exposure and a better understanding of different prevention models, which can be utilized to prevent various types of violence.

- Will be even more conscientious about making sure we offer resources and programs based on the most current best practices in primary prevention.
- Has opened up in more detail the current level of understanding, or lack thereof, of interpersonal violence dynamics and of issues of gender equality.

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a result of the extensive research and analysis performed for this project, a number of findings and recommendations have been gleaned that can be applied to the development, implementation and evaluation of a primary prevention approach to youth dating abuse in Louisville Metro. The following are based on the research represented in this report as well as on experiences and knowledge of individual team members.

We have divided these Findings and Recommendations into Micro and Macro level. In our analysis we have used the ecological framework to identify need and potential for preventive interventions. Micro level primarily deals with the intra and interpersonal levels. Because the overwhelming majority of our research focused on school-based and school-centered curricula, the micro level is in effect directed to our findings and recommendations for programmatic interventions. The Macro level addresses the community, organizational and societal levels. Our understanding of the ecological framework can be briefly represented as follows:

<b>Intrapersonal</b>	<p><u>General:</u> Attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, self-esteem, personal experiences, biological components</p> <p><u>Specific to YDA:</u> Beliefs, knowledge and attitudes about violence, gender equity, male/female roles, personal experience with interpersonal violence, gender, age, developmental stage, etc.</p>
<b>Interpersonal</b>	<p><u>General:</u> Observed behaviors, self-reported behaviors, communication style</p> <p><u>Specific to YDA:</u> Reported physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, emotional, social, economic abuse of/by partner; peer norms and behavior, etc.</p>
<b>Organizational</b>	<p><u>General:</u> Funding, human resources, data collection, data sources, organizational/agency policies, organizational will, coordination, collaboration</p> <p><u>Specific to YDA:</u> Prevention programs and services, primary prevention efforts, agencies specifically addressing YDA, agencies with programs and services addressing YDA, grants available for YDA prevention, training on YDA at organizational level, school policies and programs, etc.</p>
<b>Community</b>	<p><u>General:</u> Awareness, cultural attitudes, community readiness, community will, etc.</p> <p><u>Specific to YDA:</u> Awareness of youth dating</p>

	abuse, what it is, impact and dynamics among youth, prevalence; attitudes about violence and abuse in intimate relationships; attitudes and beliefs about sexuality in youth; cultural views and expectations on gender roles; community interest in discussing YDA; visibility of YDA efforts; understanding and support of primary prevention versus secondary or tertiary prevention efforts; grass root community efforts in violence prevention, etc.
<b>Societal/Policy</b>	<p><u>General</u>: Political will, policies, laws.</p> <p><u>Specific to YDA</u>: State and local laws addressing domestic violence; inclusion of minors in DV laws and mechanisms for protection; enforcement of laws; government policies as employer regarding DV; business policies regarding DV in the workplace; DV and YDA as issues discussed by politicians and lawmakers; etc.</p>

### ***Micro Level:***

#### Duration

- Should be of longer term duration (no less than 3 sessions); some research shows that it takes two years of exposure to a program for girls and three years exposure to a program for boys before changes are measurable and maintained over time

- Evidence suggests that (depending on the goals) boys and men benefit more from longer-term efforts than girls and women. Therefore, curricula developed or adopted by the Louisville Prevent Team should incorporate this
- Research suggests that booster sessions can be effective at maintaining program gains over time

### Format

- Target the whole population for prevention efforts, not just “at risk” youth
- Parallel and coordinated programming for boys and girls that are gender specific and separate but which also includes co-ed activities
- Use of role plays and other exercises to engage and involve youth
- When doing presentations to mixed gender audiences, use gender neutral terms but in a way that doesn’t reinforce the myth that dating abuse is gender symmetrical
- Focus on attitude change and skills-building
- All programming needs to be age, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate
- Content should avoid blaming men or women for abuse, some research supports using the “by-stander” approach (where men/boys move from bystanders to allies), while most research agrees that blaming men is not effective with boys and may even have a “backlash” effect
- Content should focus on positive behaviors not only negative ones, and give youth alternatives for the negative behaviors, beliefs and attitudes

- Parent and family/based strategies, home-visiting strategies, social-cognitive strategies, and mentoring strategies have been shown to have some success
- Use of the arts as one aspect and as a way to engage youth
- Avoid confrontation, blaming men, or blaming victims
- In mixed-gender audience use gender-neutral tone
- Introduce skills training early in program (effective communication, conflict resolution, anger management)
- Peer counseling components have been effective in some programs
- Incorporate program into existing structures (institutionalize) such as existing courses in schools
- Use local statistics and facts when talking about the issue
- Use various presentation methods
- Do multiple sessions, with booster sessions
- Base program on a theoretical framework (no particular theory was found to be more effective than others – the importance is to base the program on a theory and use it consistently throughout the program)
- Use various components to address various levels of the ecological model; for example, involve community partners as well as teachers, parents, and peer mentors, use media campaigns as well as hands-on activities, etc.

### Participants

- Specific components should be designed for boys and men; girls and women; and mixed gender
- Involve youth in the development and implementation of programs
- Program should be interactive and allow for youth participation in various ways to accommodate for different learning styles of youth

### Age

- Our project identified persons age 12 to 21 as belonging to the youth category. Programs should address persons by developmental stage from 12 to 21
- Programs for younger children should also be developed to include basic information and efforts to mold attitudes and build skills that support healthy relationships and discourage unequal and abusive relationships
- Research seems to support the belief that youth dating abuse programs should begin in elementary school as some youth start dating in late elementary/early middle school

### Partners/presenters

- Involve a variety of partners in the process of educating youth (parents, teachers, counselors, youth ministers, other adults who come into frequent contact with youth, etc.). These additional partners should be involved throughout the process of development and implementation of prevention efforts

- Involving key members of the community can help to institutionalize a program and its objectives
- Presenters should be trained and be provided with support throughout the program
- Some research shows that presenters of the same cultural/racial background may have a stronger influence on the intended audience
- Less information exists on the gender of the presenters, other than some research that supports having co-ed presenters for co-ed audiences
- Presenters should speak in the native language of the audience
- Presenters and facilitators should be trained in the curricula and in general background about youth dating abuse and community resources for youth

### Objectives

- Specific, measurable objectives should be developed at the beginning of program development
- Objectives should be developed with evaluation in mind
- The program should be structured such that it follows set objectives
- Objectives should be based on a theoretical framework

### Outcomes and Evaluation

- Evaluation components should be designed during the program development stage



- Evaluation should be more than just a pre-test/post-test to truly show effectiveness
- Evaluations should be conducted at various points post intervention to ascertain long-term versus short-term effects
- If possible, persons conducting the evaluation should not be the same as those developing or implementing the program to minimize bias; however, program developers should get input from evaluators to make sure the program is set up in a way such that meaningful evaluation is possible
- Desired outcomes should be laid out at the start with the development of goals and objectives
- Evaluation results should be used to inform and improve the program on an ongoing basis

### ***Macro Level***

#### Thoughts on Sustainable Leadership

- Working collaboratively on such a complex social issue can lead to transformational change by way of increasing knowledge, challenging long-held assumptions and modus operandi, and pulling in new partners (with the accompanying cultures, philosophies and work styles).
- Personal and professional growth occur simultaneously when addressing youth dating violence as an issue on its own, while realizing that it is in part of the broader problems our (and every) community faces in terms of violence, prejudice, gender inequality, and other forms of bias.

- Effective collaboration involves optimizing everyone's skills and strengths while finding constructive ways to deal with frustrations and miscommunication.
- Effective leadership needs to be a shared effort and process, with people using both formal leadership (such as authority) and informal leadership skills.
- We all have a role to play in preventing violence and it is through a shared process of team building that these roles become clarified and people can choose to actualize their leadership.
- A major part of leadership is challenging assumptions/preconceptions in one self and in others in a way that is non-confrontational and non-blaming
- It is imperative to first look within and face and challenge personal assumptions about violence, what a healthy relationship is, and gender role beliefs before setting out to prevent violence. One first needs to know and recognize what one and others believe and take as "givens" before jumping to conclusions.

#### Policy and Legislative

- Develop relationships and trust with policymakers at the local and state level
- Identify ways to reach and inform policymakers and other key players in policy and legislation to put youth dating abuse on their priority list
- Work with policymakers to inform policy development and changes that better reflect current knowledge about youth dating abuse and intimate partner violence dynamics

- Work with policymakers to refine/develop/improve protections and recourses for minors involved in abusive relationships
  - Identify and recommend ways to improve the current process for obtaining protective orders by minors without the need for adult involvement
  - Further research minors' ability to seek shelter, the availability of shelter for minors without accompanying adults, and mechanisms for improving minors' access to shelter when they are in an abusive relationship and cannot live at home
  - Further research minors' ability to seek health services, including mental health counseling and therapy services, without the consent of an adult. Look at ways to improve and increase minors' access to health and mental health services in dealing with an abusive situation without the need for parental consent
- Identify model policies and legislation from other states, localities and countries to assist in developing model components of legislation to protect and provide legal recourse for youth victims of abuse
- Work with local schools to develop policies that support, protect and assist youth in preventing, identifying, reporting, and managing abusive relationships
- Work with local businesses and employers to increase awareness about the impact of intimate partner violence and family violence on the workplace and inform them on the importance of having workplace violence policies

### Infrastructure

- Identify and seek funding opportunities for youth dating abuse prevention efforts and other violence prevention efforts
- Put youth dating abuse on the radar screen of major agencies and organizations working with youth in the community
- Select a point person/ hire a coordinator to administer the development of a strategic plan based on the recommendations and the findings of this report
- Develop an oversight committee (made up of the PreVent partners and others identified in this report) who will insure follow through and ongoing development of these efforts
- Need to build upon and grow the current political will and cultural readiness to address youth dating abuse and other forms of interpersonal violence by engaging key community players
- Work with partners to improve and expand the current state of data collection on youth dating abuse. For example, continue the conversation with local health department regarding the feasibility of adopting the intimate violence and sexual assault modules for the local BRFSS.

### Community Collaboration

- Develop an outreach plan to identify and engage additional partners
- Explore, identify, and engage partners from community groups, including community members not affiliated with organizations or agencies
- Clarify and define roles for community collaborators

- Engage community collaborators in the development of a strategic plan based on this report and the recommendations
- Involve universities and colleges in research, development and implementation of prevention efforts as well as partner with universities as potential evaluators of programs
- Incorporate collaboration into all levels of program/intervention development and implementation

#### Evidence-Based

- Build upon information gathered for this report regarding best practices and promising practices in youth dating abuse prevention
- Emphasize the importance of using data that has been rigorously evaluated
- Use approaches that are evidence and theory based even when evaluation data is not available on the implementation of such theoretical approaches in youth dating violence (i.e. borrow from other prevention models)
- Provide training modules based on evidence and current research on youth dating abuse, intimate partner abuse, family violence, and prevention to key partners and persons who work with youth
- Look at local, state, national and international models

### Inclusiveness

- Engage partners specifically from programs that serve GLBTQ youth, refugee and immigrant youth, and youth from other underserved backgrounds to develop specific prevention efforts targeting these youth
- Create a youth advisory board that includes youth representatives from various cultural backgrounds
- Develop prevention efforts that also address the cultural realities and perspectives of the various cultural groups in the community

### Awareness and Education

- Work with local youth to develop awareness and education strategies to increase awareness and understanding by youth/parents/youth service workers of youth dating abuse, its effect on youth and the community, and available resources for dealing with abuse
- Work with local health providers and other youth service providers to increase their awareness of youth dating abuse, its effect on youth, and existing recourses and resources for youth in our community
- Work with policymakers and other key community makers to increase their awareness and understanding of youth dating abuse
- Educate youth, government officials, parents, and service providers about youth dating abuse and youth's legal rights in regards to youth dating abuse

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